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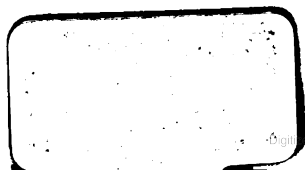
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MY OLD COUSIN.



A NOVEL.

Printed by J. Darling, Leadenhall-Street, London.

MY OLD COUSIN;

OR,

A PEEP INTO COCHIN - CHINA.

A *Novel*.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

BY THE AUTHOR OF
*ROMANTIC FACTS, OR WHICH IS HIS WIFE? VERONICA, OR
THE MYSTERIOUS STRANGER, &c.*

Τὴ μὲν γὰρ γενεᾷ εἰμεν.

ARATUS OF CILICIA.

We are of this man's family.

Thou art not of the fashion of these times.

SHAKESPEARE.

VOL. I.

London:

Printed at the Minerva Press for

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1819.

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1111

TO THE
Memory
OF
CHRISTOPHER PAUL, Esq.

A RESPECTABLE COUNTRY GENTLEMAN,
WHO LIVED TO AN ALMOST PATRIARCHAL AGE,*
AT NAFFERTON HALL,
IN THE EAST RIDING OF THE COUNTY OF YORK,

THE FOLLOWING WORK IS DEDICATED

BY HIS KINSMAN,

THE AUTHOR.

* He died in the ninety-second year of his age—about
1734.

VOL. I.

B

DRAWINGS from nature are, or ought to be, held in higher estimation than the mere efforts of fancy, though finished by the first of masters ; it is therefore to be hoped that the following pages will not be considered the less interesting, when the reader is informed that the character of Mr. St. Paul is faithfully delineated from an oral tradition of the author's maternal grandfather respecting an "*old cousin,*" from

B 2

whom

whom he derived considerable estates in Yorkshire ; and is meant, at the same time, as a record of what many country gentlemen were nearly a hundred years ago.

The place where this “ *ancient worthy*” resided was not certainly any way resembling “ *Napherton Abbey*,” but merely entitled to the epithet of “ *hall*,” from its superiority to the neighbouring cottages, and the undoubted antiquity of the occupying family.

The Abbey is nevertheless no imaginary structure, but may be yet seen at Watton, near Beverley ; and is introduced, because, from neglect, its buildings, pictures, and furniture,
seem

seem in such a rapid state of decay, that most probably before the present century has half expired, it will be merely said of them, as Virgil says of Troy,

“Fuit Ilium et ingens gloria.” *ÆN.* ii.

The story itself is acknowledged to be fictitious ; and, excepting some part of the St. Paul family, the “*dramatis personæ*” are taken from “*the world as it goes.*”

The funeral rites and other ceremonial observances brought forward, have been almost invariably kept up by the author’s maternal connexions; and however singular they appear to the southern inhabitants of Great

B 3

Britain,

Britain, may still be witnessed in many counties of the north.

For the extraordinary adventures in Cochin-China, no apology is offered, more than that there is no such thing as fixing limits to the absurdity of people professing such a preposterous doctrine as that of transmigration of souls.

MY OLD COUSIN.

CHAPTER I.

From this fair union, not of sordid gain,
But merit similar and mutual love,
True source of lineal virtue, sprung a train
Of youths and virgins :
Around their worthy parents goodly rose
These gen'rous scions. WEST.

“**B**LESS me!” exclaimed Mrs. William St. Paul, “ what a miracle is about to happen!—If my eyes do not strangely impose upon me, your ‘ *old cousin’s*’ confidential follower, Kester Hilton, has opened the gate leading to
B 4 the

the kitchen; and I declare he has entered our premises, and is hobbling along the gravel walk."

Mr. William St. Paul, in this instance, seemed to require ocular demonstration to convince him of his wife's accuracy, for he threw down his book and hastened to the window.—“ It is Kester assuredly, my dear,” said he, “ and he carries something strongly resembling a folded letter. His appearance here is truly a miracle, for, as far as I can recollect, neither ‘ *my cousin*’ nor any of his household has come within our gates these eighteen years.”

“ Never since *I* entered them certainly,” resumed the lady, “ and that is very nearly eighteen years ago. Kester’s present approach, love, I hope will convince you that the mark of respect which

I with

I with such difficulty prevailed upon you to pay to the memory of Mrs. Betty St. Paul, by putting on black for her, has been reported to the old gentleman, and not given the offence you apprehended."

"I never gave him any cause to be displeased with me," said Mr. William.

"He thinks," continued the lady—"or, if you please, I will make this amendment to my speech—*did* think differently. Your marriage with me, the child of a family brought in with the Hanoverian Succession, was to his Jacobite feelings the most mortal of offences; and I must not flatter myself, notwithstanding the sanguine hopes I will allow Kester's appearance at first inspired, he can ever pardon it."

B 5.

"Whatever

“ Whatever he *might* or *may* think,” returned Mr. William, “ I *must* repeat, I never gave any *just* cause for his displeasure. Guardians, thank Heaven ! as my dear father lived till I was more than of age, I wanted not—advice I never once thought of asking on a subject like my marriage, where, if in any case, a man ought surely to act for himself; besides, so trifling was the intercourse existing between our venerable relative and my father, and such the extraordinary temper of the former, that, had I felt disposed to solicit his sanction to my union with you, the observance of such a form would have been more likely to offend than the neglect of it.—‘ What does the lad mean,’ I dare say he would have exclaimed on my application, ‘ by troubling

troubling me on the subject of his marriage?—my interference could alone be interpreted into a tacit acknowledgment of him as my intended heir—a notion I by no means wish to encourage. My estates, Heaven be praised! are unentailed—I may now bequeath them to Jack or Tom anybody—may give them to my sisters, to make puppies of themselves with in their old age—may found an hospital for testy bachelors; and I will not deprive myself of this privilege by promise, or shadow of promise, to any living creature.”

“That somehow or other he was dissatisfied with your marriage,” said Mrs. William St. Paul, “is, however, plain, as he has never noticed you since.”

“And that I can rest satisfied without

his notice is quite as obvious; for, during the time he has apparently forgotten me, I have been one of the most contented, happiest of mankind," observed Mr. William, affectionately pressing his wife's hand.

"Whether he feel more interested about you and yours in the year 84, than you suppose him to have been in 66, will be made manifest by unsealing this," said Mrs. William St. Paul, presenting her husband with a letter which was brought in at that moment by a female servant.

The packet was folded up in a form nearly square, appeared more bulky than an ordinary epistle, and was superscribed in a large old-fashioned character—" *To Mister William Saint Paul, at Marton.*"

"The

“The shield bearing three cross cross-lets, with a leopard’s head for their crest,” remarked Mr. William, looking on the seal, “would have announced this as a missive from Napperton Abbey, though we had not been eye-witnesses of its bearer.”

It is not to be supposed that the astonished pair paid so much respect to the armorial bearings of their ancient house, as to hesitate breaking the wax on which they were impressed.

After the performance of this indispensable ceremony, two inclosures presented themselves; one contained two black enamelled mourning-rings, inscribed—“*Eliz. Saint Paul, ob. 10th Sept. 1784, Æ. 84;*” within the other was written as follows :—

“ KINSMAN

“ KINSMAN AND FRIEND,

“ It hath pleased the almightie Disposer of events to deprive us of our worthie sister and companion Elizabeth, who changed this life, we truste for a better, according to the date expressed on the rings herewith forwarded, and which I crave you and your wife (unknown) will accept, and weare in memorie of the defunct.

“ The sorrowful event above mentioned has caused a vacancy in my house, which I would right willinglie supplie by one of mine own name.

“ You must not hence infer I am quite so doting, though in my ninetieth yeare, as to think of matrimonie—that is altogether out of the question. Kinsman, it is to you I look for the occupier of the emptie chair at my table, which,
understanding

understanding that you are the father of eight or nine children, you may perhaps afford me, without seeming to yourself to sustain a very serious privation.

“ If, after duly considering what is above said, you think fitting to intrust to me and my surviving sister Mary one of your young people, forward to me, at your leisure, the respective christian names of your several sons. Your first-borne, if you thinke good, may be named among them; but I would not desire to move *him* from the house which must one daie be his own; for if my memorie doe not mislead me, I think your Marton estate, liable to a certain dowrie to your widow, is intailed upon your heirs-male lawfully proceeding.

“ With heartie good wishes for the
health

health and welfare of you all, I rest
your loving cousin,

“ CHRISTOPHER SAINT PAUL.

“ *Dated from the Abbey of Napperton,
October the seventh (N. S.) 1784.*”

“ I suppose, my dear love,” interrogated Mr. William, “ you will agree with me as to the expediency of complying with our venerable relative’s request, and that the sooner we do so, the better he will be satisfied with us ?”

A tear dimmed the lustre of Mrs. William St. Paul’s dark eyes, but it did not render them or their owner less admirable or valuable in the sight of her husband—it was the unequivocal testimony of maternal tenderness, which could not be suppressed at the idea of
parting

parting with one of her offspring, even to a situation promising eventual permanent advantages, and those at a distance from his native home not exceeding two short miles.

“ The world,” cried Mrs. William, “ and probably, in the end, our own family, would blame us if we neglected this opportunity of cultivating the friendship of your old relative ; therefore, much as it unquestionably will cost our feelings to allow *an almost stranger* to ‘ teach the young ideas’ of our child ‘ how to shoot,’ I suppose we have no other alternative than compliance.”

“ You consent, then,” resumed Mr. William St. Paul, “ to my answering this unlooked-for communication affirmatively ?”

Another

Another cloud partially obscured the bright eyes of the anxious mother.

“Of one thing, my dearest love,” said Mr. William, “you may rest assured, that ‘*the ideas*’ of our *devoted* child will not be encouraged ‘to shoot’ incorrectly in the soil into which it is to be transplanted; for ‘*my old cousin*,’ with all his eccentricities, is invariably allowed to be a careful cultivator of the moral virtues; and, though personally adverse to the Brunswick dynasty, allows his dependents to pray for them, and serve them with all due loyalty.”

“We must certainly oblige him,” observed Mrs. William—“*his* cannot be long the ‘*house of bondage*’ to whichever of our children he may select; and, after all, we may have—nay,” added she, with

with a more lively tone and clearer eye, “*must* (for your cousin *owns* to ninety) have the training of those ‘*shoots*’ in which we are so naturally and deeply interested.”

Mr. St. Paul opened his writing-desk, whilst his lady rung to order Kester Hilton whatever refreshment he might prefer during his necessary sojourn in the servants’ hall.

“The old gentleman went away the moment he delivered his letter,” said the female who answered the bell.

“I am sorry for it,” exclaimed Mr. and Mrs. William St. Paul in almost the same breath—“I fear he will consider us a very inhospitable set.”

“He most likely, in this precipitate retreat, obeyed the commands of his master,” remarked the gentleman; “for
if

if you observe, my dear, our '*old cousin*' only requests me to '*forward*' to him '*at leisure*' the '*names of our several sons.*' I will not however keep him long in suspense as to our intentions, for to-morrow shall put him in possession of them."

The succeeding evening was scarcely long enough, in the opinion of our affectionate parents, to allow time for the composition of the important letter, which on the following day was most probably to fix the fate and fortune of one of their beloved children, perhaps sign the sentence of his banishment from the paternal roof for many a long, long year.

Several sheets of paper were torn to atoms, flung out of the window, or committed to the flames, before Mr. William
St.

St. Paul could frame a letter to his mind—one was written in a style too abject, another was not sufficiently expressive of gratitude.

“The next attempt,” at length exclaimed the writer, “*shall, I am determined, be the final one:*” so it proved—it gave birth to the following sentences:—

“*To Christopher Saint Paul, Esq.
Napperton Abbey.*”

“DEAR SIR,

“We feel truly gratified by your affectionate proposal of incorporating one of our beloved children into your domestic circle, and trust that whichever of them you think proper to
select

select will prove invariably anxious to serve and oblige you, at all times and in all things, to the utmost of his power.

“ We have four daughters and five sons, all (and I flatter myself we are truly grateful to the Almighty for such an inestimable blessing) healthy, active, and, as far as we have been able to remark, well-tempered and disposed: the names of the latter are William, George, Charles, Mathew, and Rodney; the eldest of them is sixteen, the youngest four; the intermediate three in a regular gradation of two years each from their elder brother.

“ Whenever you may feel disposed to receive your intended *protégé*, he shall be ready to attend; and you will add to the obligation we already feel, in
pointing

pointing out the mode by which you would choose him to be conveyed to Napperton Abbey.

"We sincerely condole with you and your worthy sister on the lamented decease of Mrs. Elizabeth St. Paul; and with many thanks for your obliging memorials of that afflictive event, subscribe ourselves,

"Yours, gratefully and affectionately,

"WILLIAM ST. PAUL,

"MARGARET ST. PAUL."

A boy of fourteen, the only male servant retained at Marton, was the bearer of this epistle. The interval which necessarily elapsed between his departure for and return from Napperton, seemed tediously

tediously protracted; it was passed, as may be expected, by Mr. and Mrs. William in anticipations as to the result of their letter, and conjectures which of their sons would prove the object of their aged cousin's choice.

“The lot will not fall on *George* for a certainty,” said Mr. St. Paul, smiling; “and I should not wonder if the inclusion of that name in our list do not damp our good cousin's inclination *to increase his family.*”

“I should feel the same apprehension,” returned the lady, “did not the name of *Charles* tread close upon its heels: if the latter had luckily been coupled with *James*, its effect would have been magical enough to influence the old gentleman's choice irresistibly.”

“As

"As it is, I think," said Mr. William, "it will insure master Charles's election."

"And I shall rejoice," resumed Mrs. St. Paul, "if he *be* preferred to Matt or Rodney: poor fellows! they are too young to either feel or see the necessity of cheerful acquiescence in the humours of their old-fashioned cousins."

"Matt has assuredly a *certain stiffness of opinion*, which will not bend *very* readily to what he may consider an unreasonable yoke," was the remark of Mr. St. Paul: "but," continued he, "wherever our relative's choice may fall, we must rest satisfied; for I have unreservedly yielded him the privilege of appropriating to himself whichever of our '*olive branches*' he may think proper."

In due time a second formally-folded epistle from the ancient squire of Naperton Abbey made its appearance. It expressed the writer's satisfaction with his "*goode cousin's*" ready attention to his proposals, and nominated "*Mathew*" as his intended inmate.

"I have a righte wonderous prejudice in favoure of his name," wrote the old gentleman—"it has beene borne by manie whose memories I hold in highe regard—by one, moreover, whose judicial fame and uprightness were honourable to the age which gave him birth; my deceased father remembered him well: I allude to sir Mathew Hale, some time lord-chief-justice of the Common Pleas. I pray Mathew St. Paul may walk in his waies. What say you,
goode

goode cousin, to our training him to the lawe? By the blessing of God you may then live to be the father of a lord-chief-justice, or a serjeant-at-lawe at the least. But of this, the youngster's future destination, more when we meet, which I would wish to be with all convenient speed—if you please, to-morrow.

“ My age will be apologie sufficient for this seeming haste—I have not time to indulge what Horace entitleth ‘ *spem longam* ;’ in a word, I wish to see as much as I can of my intended——”

Here a word was erased, which Mr. and Mrs. William St. Paul fancied to have been “ *heir* ;” the writer had supplied its place with a repetition of the term “ *inmate* .”

“ I am, you see,” continued the ve-

nerable squire, " a sanguine old mortal in my plans and procedures.

" As your wife has not yet seene our old-fashioned abode and its no less old-fashioned occupants, she may as well witness the surrender of Mathew to our guardianship, *i. e.* if she can refrain from such manifestations of sorrow at parting from him as may possess the young man with a notion she is leaving him in the power of savages. Of this you will be the fittest judge, and must act accordingly."

The natural inference to be drawn from this letter was, that the old squire of Napperton Abbey expected his juvenile *protégé* to be conducted to the place of his destination by his parents, and with this arrangement they determined to comply.

" It

"It is now time," said Mr. William, "to announce to our family the loss we are about to sustain."

"Poor Matt!" sighed the mother, "I fear *he* will bear the information with the least philosophy. I don't know what is to become of him at Napperton Abbey, for I suppose companions of his own age will be inadmissible there."

The nursery was the scene of domestic assemblage; there Mr. William St. Paul declared the wish of his "*old cousin*," and his own compliance.

"*Which of us is to go?*" and—"I hope I am not to leave you, *papa?*" were the immediate and general exclamations.

"The worthy Mr. St. Paul has requested," said the father of the surround-

ing group, "that *Mathew* may take up his abode at the Abbey."

At the first Matt hung his head, and manifested signs of dissatisfaction with the arrangement; but in a few minutes his countenance brightened.

"Do you think the old gentleman will keep me a pony?" said the little fellow; "if he does, I'll ride over to Marton every day. Oh! I shall like to go amazingly!" continued he, without waiting for an answer to his interrogation—"Mr. St. Paul and Mrs. Mary are such comical old folks, I shall like to see them—and then the Abbey, too, is said to be so full of curious things."

"Old Betty Dry says there are ghosts in it," exclaimed one of the elder girls.—"Oh, Matt, I am so sorry for you!
I would

I would not live there for the whole world."

"Why, I don't care a pin for the ghosts," replied Matt with great spirit, "for I have heard papa say a thousand thousand times, such things are only invented by silly old women like nurse Dry to frighten children with, and I'm sure papa would not have said so if he had not believed it to be quite entirely true."

A word from papa called every one to order; and after a solemn exhortation to Mathew, that he should endeavour in every thing to serve and oblige his good relations at Napperton Abbey, which was delivered in the presence of his brothers and sisters, he dismissed the children to their beds.

Matt did not however sleep with his usual soundness; the anticipated novelties he was to witness on the morrow occupied his mind too fully to allow of uninterrupted repose: with the first dawn of morning he was at the window, and never did day, to mortal conception, "come on more heavily" than at this important period to our impatient youth.

It was seven o'clock before papa's voice in the passage announced that he was up, and preparing for the little journey to Napperton Abbey. Matt immediately opened the door, and presented himself fully equipped for mounting a galloway, borrowed for the occasion from a neighbouring farmer.

At nine the horses were at the gate,
and

and within a few minutes after that hour, papa, mamma, and Matt, were on their way to "*my old cousin's*."

I cannot say the conversation, during this short ride, was of the most lively or entertaining sort; on the side of Mr. and Mrs. William St. Paul it was confined to such advice as might be expected to proceed from the lips of anxious parents about to commit such a sacred trust as "the training up of a child," into the hands of persons pretty nearly strangers to them.

Matt promised undeviating obedience, but occasionally interrupted the parental orations by interrogatories respecting his old cousins and their residence.

The time-worn turrets of the latter were soon in sight, and certainly never

appeared with a more sombre aspect than at the present moment: the day was gloomy, the season late autumn, and the spirits of the approaching party by no means exuberant.

“ It is truly a gloomy prison-like place,” whispered Mrs. William; and as the gentleman addressed could advance nothing in contradiction of the assertion, he remained silent.

Both parents mechanically looked towards Matt, to ascertain if possible the impression made upon him by surrounding objects. Matt certainly and obviously participated in the feelings of his father and mother; but there was no opportunity for further remark, as they now perceived Kester Hilton apparently watching their progress from a gate opening to an avenue,

Where

Where lofty walnuts form'd a lonely shade,
And sun scarce gilt the solitary glade, WESTON.

and which led up to the habitation of
the friends they were on the point of
visiting.

CHAPTER II.
~~~~~

The storied arras, source of fond delight,  
With old achievement charms the wilder'd sight ;  
And, still with heraldry's rich hues imprest,  
On the dim window glows the pictur'd crest ;  
The skreen unfolds its many-colour'd charts,  
The carpet, blooming flow'rs and bleeding hearts.

ROGERS.

THE edifice here designated Napperton Abbey had not formed more than a tenth part of the original structure, the ichnography of which was yet to be distinctly traced in an adjoining field, completely overspread with lines of foundation. The remains were sufficient to  
prove

prove the former magnificence of the place: they consisted of a long square pile, flanked at three of its corners with octagon towers; from an angle extended an irregular line of building, the lower part of which had in former days formed a cloistered communication with the main body of the Abbey, and the upper a dormitory. The whole, with the exception of a projecting Gothic window, richly sculptured with stone in the most vivid style, was erected of brick.

The present principal entrance opened from the centre of the ancient cloister, which still retained its pointed windows, and was approached through a square court, of which one division formed a small bowling-green, and the other formal knots and parterres of flowers: the whole

whole was skirted by a venerable yew hedge cut into a variety of whimsical forms.

Our equestrians were directed by Kester Hilton, who followed them from the walnut avenue, to the court above mentioned, where they alighted at what, in the vulgar phraseology of Yorkshire, is denominated "a horsing-stone," which for many a year had assisted the fair dames of Napperton Abbey in mounting and dismounting their palfreys, and beneath which was an arched shelter for the "*Cerberus*" who mounted guard on the outworks during the dreary season of night.

The venerable proprietor of this antique mansion received his visitors at its principal portal with a smiling countenance; he held out the "*right hand of fellowship*"

*fellowship*" to Mr. William, patted Matthew encouragingly on the head, and, according to the fashion of his day, saluted their female companion. There was sufficient of benignity in the aspect of this reverend personage to dispossess Mrs. William St. Paul, at the first glance, of every thing like prejudice against him, and to secure her from exhibiting such testimonies of sorrow at parting with Matt, as the old squire seemed, from his letter, to anticipate.

" Nothing ill can dwell in such a temple," was consequently the mental exclamation of the good lady; and her son visibly participated in her feelings, for he followed his ancient protector along the passage with smiles of satisfaction.

A delineation of the exterior of such  
a prepossessing

a prepossessing individual as old Mr. St. Paul, the reader may probably consider as his due; the artist will therefore endeavour to make his portrait correct, and as he draws "*from nature*," flatters himself the likeness will be tolerably striking.

The ancient squire had, in his juvenile days, been full six feet high, and did not, even at ninety, fall far short of that standard: his person was yet good, and by no means destitute of grace: his face had the oval of the unfortunate Stuart family, with a high-raised aquiline nose, somewhat pointed chin, dark penetrating eyes, and a particularly clear brown complexion, with as few wrinkles as are generally perceptible on a face of sixty years' standing. His dress harmonized admirably with his venerable figure,



figure, and gave him the appearance of a picture, in the costume of the earliest part of the last century, walking from its frame: his head was covered with a copiously-flowing peruke of auburn hair, and surmounted with a triangular cocked hat: the embroidered ends of his neck-cloth extended to the bottom of his waist, and the width and shortness of his coat-sleeves displayed a shirt beautifully plaited, and confined at the wrist with large sparkling gold buttons.

He walked with a firmness rarely to be seen at an advanced period of life, and seemed to carry a gold-headed cane more for ornament than use, which was particularly striking, as he preceded Mr. and Mrs. William along the passage leading to a room, the walls of which were covered with portraits of the English

lish monarchs down to Anne Stuart, and the floor with painted canvas, chequered in imitation of black and white marble. Here they were received by Mrs. Mary St. Paul, a lady, allowing for difference of sex, the exact counterpart of her brother.

In strict conformity with ancient hospitality, a profusion of refreshments, consisting of ham, tongue, marmalades, and fruit, accompanied by mead and spiced wine in silver goblets, was immediately presented.

Mr. William very judiciously introduced a conversation respecting the history and antiquity of the Abbey, and the impression its venerable aspect had made upon his wife. This was the subject of all others most acceptable to the old spinster and her brother, who perfectly

fectly idolized the place of their nativity, and would not have exchanged its mouldering towers for the most sumptuous palace.

“It was founded,” said the old gentleman, “during the time of the celebrated crusades in the reign of Richard Cœur de Lion, by an ancestor of ours, whose personal infirmities prevented his attendance on the sovereign to Palestine. Fifty nuns, of the Gilbertine order, were placed in it, bound by the most solemn vows to offer up hourly prayers for the success of the holy wars. At the dissolution of religious houses, Henry the Eighth granted it to sir Roger B——, and by him, for the sake of the materials, it was condemned to immediate and entire destruction. Fortunately

nately the St. Pauls had yet estates in the neighbourhood, and the pious possessor of them, at a very exorbitant price, purchased and preserved all that now remains of the originally extensive Abbey of Napperton. At it he took up his permanent abode, and since that period it has been the chosen, I may say cherished seat of our family; and I trust," added he, after a short pause, "the name of St. Paul may yet flourish through many a revolving year, upon this consecrated, hallowed ground."

The enthusiastic speaker concluded with an energy that likened his last words to a solemn invocation, and seemed so much affected, that Mr. William thought it amounted to an act of humanity to interrupt him, by remarking that  
his

his wife would feel high gratification in going over the different apartments of the place.

“The shutters are open, Mary?” said Mr. St. Paul.

“Yes, and Mary Johnson in waiting to attend our good cousins,” answered the aged spinster.

“Mary’s attendance shall be dispensed with for this time,” cried the master of the family, with a lively smile, “for I am determined to be the shewman myself to-day.”

He then arose from his high-backed leather chair, resumed his cane, and with an air of infinite importance led the way through the cloistered passage to a large hall, lighted by the projecting Gothic window before mentioned, which yet retained many tolerable specimens of stained

stained glass, exhibiting themselves in the forms of crosses, mitres, and frequent repetitions of the crosslets and leopard's head which constituted the armorial bearings of the founder and his lineal descendants.

The walls were covered with scripture-pieces on canvas and panel, probably designed as patterns for tapestry: Belshazzar's feast, and queen Esther petitioning the Persian monarch for her oppressed people, were conspicuous for chaste execution and brilliant colouring.

"This room," said the ancient ciceroni, "was, in monastic times, a private refectory for the lady abbess of the house: here, as you will by and by observe, we yet dine—the oak table is the same which has been in use for centuries."

From

From this hall they proceeded to a spacious parlour hung with tapestry, the subject of which was nearly concealed by a long series of family pictures.

“The portrait on panel at the upper end of the room,” said the guide, “represents the pious founder of this place: he is, you observe, in complete armour, and yet it is recorded of him that he was a cripple from his birth. This, with some, impeaches the authenticity of the painting—to me it is a proof of how gladly he *would* have been habilimented as a warrior; and how severely he must have felt the infirmities which prevented him being so. His immediate descendants hang, in regular succession, below him.

“At the head of the party on the  
other

other side," pointing to the right, "you behold Francis St. Paul, who may well be entitled the saviour of his *house*, for he it was who stopped the Vandal rage of sir Roger B——, and whom *we* have to thank for the interesting relics of Napperton Abbey. He had large estates at Yarm, alias Yarum, in the North Riding of our county, several of which he alienated in order to recover possession of this sacred and favourite spot. His son and three daughters are in the line with him: the first was a beauty in her day, and an attendant at the gloomy court of queen Mary the First.

"The next series commences with my dear and right worthy father. I wish it may be justly reported, in after times, that I walked as regularly in his upright ways, as my wig and cravat testify



testify I have copied his attire. The likeness was admirable, and the picture considered one of sir Godfrey Kneller's masterpieces.

"The matron to the left is my honoured mother, the younger females my sisters Margaret, Elizabeth, and Mary. The artist who drew them seems to have been a pretty close imitator of sir Peter Lely, which is evidenced by his affected attitudes and sleepy half-shut eyes.

"The little urchin in green, who completes the family-party, is, or rather *was* your humble servant and cousin, as he appeared some fourscore years since.—What think *you* of the little gentleman, sir Mathew, hey?" interrogated the old squire.

"He's a funny little fellow," smiled

VOL. I.

D

Matt,

Matt, “and wears the prettiest coat I ever saw in my life: and the hat, mamma—why, I declare, it’s trimmed with gold!”

“I am glad you like them,” exclaimed the delighted Mr. St. Paul—“faith I am heartily glad of it: I see my young cousin and I shall agree right well. Through life I have admired the fashions of my youth—there was in them a just distinction of ranks; the squire and the squire’s son might then be known without difficulty from farmer John and *his* son; now, I suppose there is not a man or boy in any of our villages but wears the same cut of coat with my lord and my lord’s heir.—The coat and hat that you have discernment enough to like, Matt, were made for me in London, by the young and ever-  
to

to-be-lamented duke of Gloucester's tailor, and in them I sat to sir James Thornhill when he took my likeness: they are yet preserved—to-morrow you shall see them, shall be allowed the privilege of putting them on—ay, and were it not for the sables in which respect to my recently-departed sister now clothes us, you should *wear* them too."

Mr. and Mrs. William St. Paul could not avoid exchanging a smile at the energy of their ancient friend, and the *outré* appearance which poor Matt would have been compelled to assume, had it not been for his mourning habit.

After Mr. St. Paul had done expatiating on the portraits, he called the attention of his auditors to a tolerable representation of the youthful David's

victory over the Philistine of Gath, which he assured them had formerly ornamented the chapel of the house. Nor were the carpet (which occupied little more than the centre of the floor) and the stuffed-backed chairs, enriched with "golden fruit and ever-blooming flowers," passed over in silence.

"These," observed the senior St. Paul, "are existing proofs, that however much their portraits encourage an opinion that the females of our family neglected not the adornment of their persons, yet they found time for the embellishment of other and more durable objects than themselves. I fear, my good kinswoman, those of the next generation will not have monuments to exhibit of their aunts' and grandmothers' industry like these chairs and carpets."

The

The next apartment visited was above stairs, and, in modern language, would have been denominated a drawing-room—at Napperton Abbey it was ycleped "*the south parlour*." Its arras was in delightful preservation, and presented, in compartments divided by dark-brown wainscot, the history of Sampson, from the sacrifice offered by Manaoh and his wife, to the dreadful catastrophe in the banqueting-house at Gaza: in the concluding scene the designer had been particularly successful—Raphael could not have expressed horror and astonishment more naturally than they appeared in the countenance of a woman, from whose hands a knife is falling, with which she seems to have been dividing a piece of fruit.

The oaken pannels on the chimney

D 3

side

side of the room presented portraits of old Mr. St. Paul and his sisters at an advanced period of life.

A picture with two fox-hounds surmounted a narrow chimney-glass, elaborately cut around the edges and mounted in a plain gold frame; the carpet and chairs, together with an antique sofa, denominated by the old gentleman a "*squab*," were again presented, in proof that the ladies of former days allowed not their needles to rust in idleness.

From the south parlour they advanced along a matted passage to the state bed-room. Its dimensions were the same as the great hall below, and it was lighted by a similar projecting window: its ancient cabinets of inlaid walnut with pannels of looking-glass, and  
its

its high chimneypiece\* with a basso-relievo representation of the wise and foolish virgins, well cut in wood, deservedly drew forth the admiration of Mr. and Mrs. William, and the eloquence of their aged relation: the only remark of the latter on the high-canopied bed, of somewhat faded green velvet and tarnished lace, was, that Henry the Eighth reposed in it one night, and, for any thing he knew, might plan the destruction of the house whilst he found a safe and hospitable reception under its roof, as he was recorded to have done at Thornton† Abbey, in Lincolnshire.

Another

\* This chimneypiece is at Burton Agnes, the Boyntons' seat.

† *Vide* Gent's curious History of Hull.

Another passage, of no extraordinary width, conducted to a lofty and very spacious room, nearly surrounded by oaken presses of books.

“ This,” cried Mr. St. Paul, striking his cane upon the floor, “ is the place which, of all others, I most venerate: I am assured, by a well-read antiquary, that it contains the most perfect collection of monastic books extant.

“ Here you may peruse manuscripts in perfect preservation, which have furnished instruction to many a departed generation.

“ Look at this richly-illuminated missal—its embellishments cannot be surpassed by all the boasted efforts of modern art: it was a present to the abbess from Edward the Third’s queen, Philippa;



lippa; portraits of herself and her numerous family are beautifully depicted in the titlepage: and do but remark the peculiar delicacy and correctness of the characters in which it is written.

“The next presses contain the earliest specimens of the useful art of printing—‘*principes editiones*’ sufficient to gratify the most rapacious book-fancier. The remaining cases are furnished with productions in various languages, and respecting almost every art and science; among them Matt will find the life and writings of his great namesake, sir Matthew Hale, whose example I shall use every endeavour to press upon his notice, as highly worthy of imitation.

“But I perceive, my good cousins, that your eyes wander towards the *green*

D 5

*curtains*

*curtains*\* at the extremity of the room: you fancy, I doubt not, that they conceal the *images* I worship; for unquestionably, like the rest of my neighbours, you suspect me to be a rank papist, and found your opinion on this condemning proof, that I attend not the parish church. My motives for this apparent neglect of religion are, and probably will be ever confined to my own bosom: that I attempt not to influence others to act as I do in this instance, is plain, from the regularity with which my household conform to all the ordinances of the established faith of the country.

\* The ancient library, as well as other apartments here described, are pretty faithfully drawn from Watton Abbey, though any one visiting it will look in vain for the "*green curtains*" and "*illuminated missal*."

country. I notice this more particularly at present, to prevent your indulgence of a notion that I shall endeavour to pervert or eradicate those religious principles which, as far as his tender years would allow, you have doubtless instilled into the mind of my young charge; and at the same time I beg leave to assure you, he will never run a greater risk of offending me than by negligently performing the duties required by his religious profession.

“ But I must not permit even this serious subject to allow me to forget the ‘*green curtains*,’ continued he, at the same time withdrawing them, and exhibiting likenesses of king James the Second and his queen, Mary d’Este, and their son.

“ These are not probably the idols

D 6

you

you expected, though they are certainly representations I greatly respect. To the gracious sovereign you behold, my worthy father swore a solemn allegiance, and to the lineal descendants of the same monarch I *cannot* forget that, in the last moments of my departed parent, I vowed an unalterable fidelity."

As if to prevent further remark on the pictures just exhibited, or the declaration the sight of them had occasioned, he turned to others of a very different description, which occupied vacancies between the bookcases.

"This Lucretia," remarked the old squire, "is universally admired for beauty of colouring and expression of countenance, though, till very lately, such was the delicacy of my virgin sisters, it has not been publicly shewn; yet, for  
my

my own part, I think the redundant charms of Adonis's companion, near the door, an infinitely more indelicate display."

The ringing of a bell, which Mr. St. Paul informed his visitors announced the serving of dinner, put a stop to farther progress through the house; this, however, was no very serious loss, for it would only have shewn the inconvenient intricacies, almost labyrinths, of an ancient country mansion, and conducted the explorers to spacious sleeping-rooms, which, though furnished with many comforts, exhibited not a single modern luxury.

"You see," observed the master of this curious place, as they descended the principal staircase, remarkable for nothing

thing but its ponderous oak bannisters and dark-coloured steppings rubbed bright—"you see we country folks, in defiance of town practice, continue to take our principal meal at noon. For the extreme lateness of the fashionable dinner-hour I never could satisfactorily account; the arrangement unquestionably originated among the commercial part of society, anxious for a long morning in which to transact their business; and, as such, I should have thought it not very likely to be adopted by the higher classes, who pretty generally affect a sovereign contempt for every thing connected with trade, except when necessity drives them to the city in pursuit of a wealthy wife."

Such a repast crowned the board as  
might

might be expected from the old English notions of Mr. St. Paul and his sister. Eels of extraordinary length and thickness (the produce of the Abbey ponds), a noble sirloin of beef, and a capacious plumpudding, were conspicuous objects. The madeira and sherry of modern days were looked for in vain; their place was supplied by genuine home-brewed October, foaming in silver tankards, in one of which, the old gentleman's favourite, commonly known in the family by the epithet of "*the squire's pin\* tankard*," floated a toast well powdered with grated nutmeg and ginger.

To

\* The *pin tankard* of former days took its name from a row of pegs placed within it at equal distances, by which the draughts of the different drinkers were regulated. Such a one is still preserved in the author's family.

To the dinner succeeded a dark blue-and-gold china bowl of punch, prepared by the experienced hand of Kester Hilton, whose peculiar skill in combining its sweets and sour was proudly dwelt on by his ancient master. The punch-bowl was flanked with pipes and tobacco; nor were the ladies forgotten—mead and sack were presented to them in small round silver cups, introduced by the name of tumblers.

Mr. St. Paul soon *brandished his weapon*, as he denominated his pipe, and this seemed the signal for the departure of the females, as Mrs. Mary immediately rose from her chair, and leaning on the arm of her cousin's wife, proceeded as rapidly as rheumatism would allow to the low parlour.

“ Women



“ Women always take flight at the first fire,” a joke Mr. St. Paul never failed sporting the moment he was left to the enjoyment of his pipe and the converse of his male visitants, was scarcely uttered, before the party was increased by the arrival of a gentleman named Sharkem, who was the principal attorney of an adjacent market-town, and had for some years been the legal adviser to the owner of Napperton Abbey.

As this important “ limb of the law” will make his appearance pretty frequently in the course of the present drama, a delineation of his person, and some few particulars of his *secret history*, may not be considered improper or unacceptable; but we must not so far

far fail in respect to him, as to give them at the end of a chapter.

CHAP-

CHAPTER III.  
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—————A man
That hath a mint of phrases in his brain—
One whom the music of his own vain tongue
Doth ravish like enchanting harmony—
A man of compliments, whom right and wrong
Have chosen as an umpire of their mutiny.

SHAKESPEARE.

Mr. Sharkem rose not in stature to the middle height of men, which was more particularly observable from the extensive circumference of his body ; his face was of an amplitude such as might be expected from the dimensions of his person, and only remarkable for width
of

of mouth and deep-sunk grey eyes, over which the lids had mostly the appearance of being half-shut; hairs, white as snow, but very thinly sown, crowned "*the temples of his head,*" and his gait was of that hobbling description which testified of muscles a little stiffened with the gout.

For his present affluence he was not, like many of his wealthy neighbours, indebted to his ancestors—almost every thing he possessed being the product of his indefatigable industry. His father was a little farmer, oppressed at once by an exorbitant landlord and a numerous family, and incapable of doing any thing more for the latter than educating them at the village school, and apprenticing them, on the easiest terms, to such trades as suited their inclinations.

Our

Our lawyer, at the age of fifteen, was taken into the office of a neighbouring attorney, and in lieu of the fee usual in such cases, was to act in the humble capacity of groom and footboy during one half of the time for which he was articulated; but his master soon discovered him to be a lad of too much *promise* to be employed in such menial services, and consequently advanced him to a desk in his own *private office*, long before the expiration of one half his clerkship.

The world, with its usual charity where every thing is left to conjecture, attributed this sudden exaltation to *certain professional secrets* which had accidentally fallen to the knowledge of the young man, and which his principal was bribing him to preserve; nor did these

these suspicions die away when, on Sharkem's admission as an attorney, he was announced as partner in the business of his patron.

In a short time, the death of the senior solicitor threw the whole business into young Sharkem's hands, together with a legacy of five thousand pounds. From this period his fortune rapidly increased: estate after estate fell in to him, from the inability of the mortgagers to pay either principal or interest; much valuable property was purchased by him at a low price, from the fortunate circumstance of having money ready to advance to the needy or extravagant at a short notice; his wife also brought him ten thousand pounds; he succeeded likewise to several lucrative appointments in the town, and connected with the

the county, where he resided. In a few words, at the season when I have thought proper to introduce him at Napperton Abbey, he was universally esteemed a *very* rich man, and likely to leave his children (of whom he had three) much more affluently appointed than many a noble lord whose estate extended for miles, and whose pedigree (if you would credit the genealogical tree) could be regularly traced back to the flood.

Age, experience, and profession, had united to endue this *great man* with such a degree of self-command that it was but very seldom he allowed his countenance to present a faithful index of his feelings; on his pretent *entrée* into the great hall of Napperton Abbey it did, however, certainly do so, for never

ver was amazement more legibly written on human face than it appeared on Sharkem's, when he beheld the companion of the venerable squire.

The long-persevered-in nonintercourse between the St. Pauls of Napperton and their namesakes of Marton, accounted very naturally for the astonishment thus manifested by Mr. Sharkem; and had it been unaccompanied by something which, to Mr. William, betrayed an air of disapprobation, he would not have attended to it particularly. What tended to strengthen his interpretation of the attorney's looks was a recollection that popular opinion ascribed his attentions to the old bachelor squire to mercenary motives—nay, even to a hope of succeeding to the whole of his extensive estates; nor were these apprehensions
banished,

banished, though the person who excited them exclaimed—"Well, my dear, worthy, excellent friend, this is as it should be; I am truly, extremely, excessively gratified, rejoiced, and delighted to see it. Mr. William St. Paul, I congratulate you, from my soul congratulate and give you joy."

The clouds exhaling from Mr. St. Paul's tube of best Virginia, not to mention his decaying eyesight, interfered with his ocular observation of the legal gentleman's approach, but his hearing, which was pretty accurate, from the late exclamation, gave him notice of the person who advanced, and also told him that Sharkem regarded Mr. William's reception at Napperton Abbey in the light of declaring him to the world as his heir—a notion which he wished not

to encourage, for, amidst the many excellent traits in the old worthy's character, he had one incorrigible foible, which was, to confine within his own bosom, as long as life remained, the name of the person whom he meant to succeed him at Napperton, or indeed the way in which he designed to dispose of his fine estate there.

At the period when he made up his mind to incorporate into his family one of his young cousins, he had privately considered the circumstance was likely to give rise to a public opinion that the boy adopted must necessarily be designed for his successor, and probably establish a similar hope in the family of St. Paul of Marton ; and this he determined to discountenance in two different ways, first by training his *protegé* to some profession,

profession, and then by a private explanation with his cousin William.

The reason for this mental reservation on a subject where suspense was sure to create anxiety in those whose consanguinity made them naturally look forward to the domains of Napperton Abbey, may still (without having recourse to any thing very far fetched) be traced to motives far from dishonourable, nay, on the contrary, fraught with the tenderest humanity : he wished not, as he had repeatedly said to his sisters, to inspire hopes which, in the end, circumstances might induce him to disappoint, and therefore was determined, in his lifetime, never to specifically point out his heir, excepting to the person who should make his will.

That Sharkem knew these to be the

sentiments of Mr. St. Paul, is as certain as that the old gentleman nourished them: this being the case, the speech which the artful man of law seemed to intend as congratulatory to Mr. William, we cannot, I am afraid, ascribe to any very worthy motives, and may be excused, if we presume it designed to elicit from the venerable squire that which might dash from the hand of his relation the cup of hope when nearly at his lips: that it produced something bordering on this strong figure is undeniable, for, in answer to it, Mr. St. Paul said—"I know not whether you will consider my cousin William as a proper object for congratulation, when you hear that I am about to rob him of one of his sons, whom I have prevailed on him to entrust to my care. Observe, however,

ever, friend Sharkem," and he seemed by the direction of his eye to wish this part of his speech might be attended to by Mr. William St. Paul—"observe, I do not intend to train the youngster a fine gentleman, but merely educate him for some respectable profession, in which, if he acquit himself to my satisfaction, and I live long enough, I shall assuredly feel it a duty to forward him to the utmost of my power."

"You are so considerate, so good, so kind, so——" *perfect*, probably the flattering solicitor was about to add, had he not been interrupted by the old gentleman's offering him some punch, with this remark:—"But perhaps you will not venture on it, for I know you have not dined?"

"At any other house," returned the

E 3

solicitor,

solicitor, "I would certainly refuse; but your punch, my dear, worthy, hospitable friend, is so tempting! so capital! so superexcellent! there is no possibility of resisting it—though, to be sure, I have not dined; we who are in business cannot eat at your rational hours, or certainly, certainly we should adopt them."

"I am told," resumed the old-fashioned squire, "that though your very fine folks have their table covered for what they call dinner at six or seven in the evening, yet, in truth, they eat their heartiest meal at noon, under the new-invented title of *lunch*; and I am told, too, that some of your most delicate ladies can then apply pretty actively to the cold sirloin and the bottled porter, though, at dinner, they would be shocked

ed

ed beyond expression to have so vulgar a thing upon their plate as beef, or a tankard of sound October at their lips."

" True, specifically, exactly," cried Mr. Sharkem; " the satire is just, is admirable. But all this time I have neglected inquiring after your dear, amiable, inestimable sister. How is the excellent lady, Mr. St. Paul?"

" Quite as well," returned the squire, " as one can expect, under the united pressure of age, rheumatism, and our late loss."

" It was *indeed* a loss—a deplorable privation," resumed Sharkem, with a becoming gravity, and his eyes nearly shut—" we were so afflicted at it! we did so commiserate you! Mrs. Sharkem has not, I believe, yet ventured on visit-

ing Mrs. Mary St. Paul; but she has many and just apologies and excuses: my gout has required such daily, hourly, nay, I may say unremitting attendance; and then our pet, our little Frances, has been ill; and last, though not by any manner of means least, she was so afraid, so apprehensive of unintentionally renewing your good tender-hearted sister's sorrow by her natural condolences."

The subject was too painful to the old gentleman's feelings for him to allow of its being long dwelt upon; he therefore changed the conversation to what he conjectured (and he was correct) was the *real* occasion of Mr. Sharkem's present visit.

"Pray, Mr. Sharkem," interrogated he, "are you yet in possession of the
terms

terms which the lessees of the Napper-ton Holme estates propose for the renewal of their expiring term?"

"They sanguinely flatter themselves—they hope, my dear, considerate, worthy friend, that you will not object to renew at the old rent," said the attorney; "and indeed, indeed, good sir, the present times are such—we have, you know and are aware, scarcely recovered from the shock of the American war—that I think it would not answer to ask, or demand, or expect any *very* considerable advance; and then they are such *old*, such *very old* tenants, Mr. St. Paul, and have paid their rents so punctually, so cheerfully!"

"It is far from my intention to oppress," returned the old squire, "but I cannot forget the advantages which my

tenants have derived during their long leases, and the different price of lands now and in the year sixty-three: in short, Mr. Sharkem, I expect an advance of ten per cent. on the late rental."

"My dear, good, excellent neighbour and friend," resumed the solicitor, "you are, I fear, exorbitant—you will excuse me, pardon me: you know I am, I ought to be on the side of the poor tenantry—But you are acquainted with my way."

"I shall certainly expect the advance proposed," cried Mr. St. Paul, with a peremptory tone; "lord H——'s and sir F. B——'s tenants pay infinitely higher, I am certain, and we do not hear them utter a single murmur."

"You know the best undoubtedly, assuredly, worthy sir," replied Sharkem,

"far

“far therefore be it from me to dictate or advise. I shall duly and specifically report your ultimatum, and recommend and press compliance with it. The leases, of course, are to be for the term or continuance of twenty-one years, as usual with your family?”

“I have no objection,” answered Mr. St. Paul, “though I fear those who succeed me will; but I have the wish to die with the character of a good landlord; at any rate, it will occasion my being regretted, though I held my situation in life well on to a century—perhaps a rather unreasonable portion of time, compared with the general allotment of years.”

“Dear Mr. St. Paul,” said the lawyer, “you, of all men living, have least rea-

son to doubt of posthumous respect and reverence: when the world is deprived of *you*, the loss will be incalculable, irreparable."

Mr. Sharkem now rose to take leave, and we need not doubt that he went off in high good-humour, as he had realized five hundred pounds by his bargain with the squire; for no less a sum had been previously offered to him for a renewal of leases, if procured under an advance of *thirty per cent.*

At four precisely Mrs. Mary summoned the gentlemen to tea, which she still retained her spinster's privilege of making: it was presented, as the highest of compliments, in the old lady's favourite blue-and-gold dragon china, which assuredly, in the present rage for antiques

tiques of that description, would have been considered *vastly cheap* at five* guineas the cup and saucer.

At five o'clock, the horse which was to convey Mr. and Mrs. William St. Paul to Marton was, according to their order, at the gate.

The parting scene between Matt and mamma fell infinitely short in the pathetic to what might have been reasonably expected on a first separation, the secret cause for which may perhaps be traced to a private lecture which master Mathew received from his papa, in which he failed not to remind him that he was far too big a boy, too much of a man, to think of crying after mamma. Mamma also was restrained by what she observed,

* This price was actually *offered* at Scarborough for dragon china.

served, during her short visit at the Abbey, of the characters of the truly venerable Mr. St. Paul and his sister.

Taciturnity prevailed until they had ridden for the space of five minutes from the walnut avenue, when Mrs. William remarked—"Matt, I think, when he becomes accustomed to the change, will be very comfortable."

"He *may* be," replied her husband, "if his '*stiffness in opinion*' do not interfere with any of our worthy, though certainly eccentric '*old cousin's*' long-cherished prejudices."

CHAP.

CHAPTER IV.
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When nurs'd with skill, what tempting fruits appear!

E'en now, sagacious foresight points to shew

A little bench of heedless bishops here,

And there a *chancellor* in embryo.

SHENSTONE.

ABOUT half-an-hour after the departure of Mr. and Mrs. William St. Paul from the Abbey, Kester introduced an elderly personage, whose exterior would have appeared singular to eyes far more experienced than those of Matt; his name was Sympson, though he was mostly designated, by the privileged squire  
of

of Napperton, “ *Old Six-and-eight-pence.*”

“ This gentleman and you, sir Mathew,” said Mr. St. Paul, “ must be better acquainted; in a few words, you will henceforth appear in this family in the characters of pupil and tutor.—Sympson,” continued he, “ I delegate to you the charge of reading ‘ *Coke upon Littleton,*’ &c. &c. all which will be found in the sixth press of the library, with this youth. Master Mathew, you I recommend, by a guardian’s privilege, to listen to this your preceptor with reverence, and consider him (as indeed he is) duly qualified to instruct you in the profession you are doomed to follow.”

Sympson took a copious pinch of snuff, and bowed assent. Poor Mathew  
said



said nothing; but I suppose his silence was interpreted favourably, as Mr. St. Paul, waving his hand to Kester, who stood in the back-ground with a back-gammon-board, desired him to approach.

In a few minutes our venerable friend and his visitor had their men arranged in battle array, and began rattling the dice.

“Aces!” exclaimed Sympson.

“Six and ace!” returned his antagonist; so the game commenced: whilst it is continuing, we will enter into a few particulars of Sympson’s history, and give a rough delineation of his person, which probably may not be uninteresting to my readers, who will doubtless wish to receive all possible information respecting the man from whom old

Mr.

Mr. St. Paul intended Matt to derive the rudiments of his legal information.

James Sympson was the son of a country gentleman of small landed property, who resided in a village adjacent to Napperton, and had always been on a very intimate footing with the St. Paul family. At the age of sixteen or seventeen he was placed in an eminent attorney's office, and studied so successfully, that at twenty-one he had laid in a very unusual stock of professional information. After creditably going through the proper forms of admission in London, he returned to his native village, and never surely had young man a better prospect of success.

But poor Sympson, reader, had a fault—  
—who is there among us that can lay  
his

his hand upon his heart and say *he has not?*—his fault, too, alas! was of such a nature, that notwithstanding the best of introductions, “troops of friends,” extensive information, unquestionable probity; general esteem, his office, within “one little year” from the commencement of his practice, was the least frequented of any solicitor’s in the county: in fact, he was terribly addicted to the bottle, and whenever an opportunity offered, inebriated himself to a most shocking degree.

In vain his relatives and friends remonstrated—in vain they foretold the blight which must mildew his fair prospects; he promised well, but, alas! performed not—his propensity was too strong to be extinguished.

Beggary stared him in the face, and  
he

he would indeed have been completely ruined, had it not been for the benevolent interference of Mr. St. Paul and some of the ancient friends of his family. At Napperton Abbey, in particular, he was invariably received with friendly cordiality—there he *always* acquitted himself well; in truth, the venerable squire would not allow him to do otherwise, for his potion of liquor, whether ale, wine, or punch, was always meted out, and on no account was he allowed to exceed it.

Backgammon was a favourite amusement with old Mr. St. Paul, and as Sympson also played it, he went for that express purpose three or four times in the course of each week. He was about twenty years junior to his patron, and his countenance, even at an advanced

vanced age, was extraordinarily prepossessing; it presented, in profile, a strong resemblance to his most gracious majesty king George the Third, and could not have failed making an invariably favourable impression, had it not been mostly besmeared with an intolerable quantity of Scotch snuff; such indeed was his passion for that "*titillating dust*," that, not satisfied with the largest box, he had a waistcoat-pocket lined with tin properly fitted up for its reception: his pinches, too, differed as much in quantity as they did in frequency from those of his rivals in this delicate method of consuming tobacco, for, generally speaking, he extravagantly regaled his nose with *half a handful* at a time.

It may be guessed how this liberality  
would

would bronze his face; but I defy the most fertile imagination to conceive the state of his wardrobe, which, if it had been scraped, would have furnished half-a-dozen\* moderate-sized snuff-boxes; and yet, after all, his clothes were not sufficiently masked by this facing, to prevent the most transient observer from perceiving they had been shaped by Mr. St. Paul's *operator in cloth*; indeed, to let you into a secret, they had been really worn by the old squire, as Sympson invariably succeeded to his cast Sunday suits when they were about a year's standing.

But we must dwell no longer on this *original*†, the backgammon must close, for Kester summons to the hall—the cold

\* Spoken metaphorically, of course.

† The author well remembers him.

cold beef and roasted potatoes are waiting.

As Matt was yet considered in the light of a stranger, for this one evening he must be indulged with eating his apple-tart and new milk along with his old cousins and their guest. At this he was on all accounts highly delighted, and on none more than because he sanguinely interpreted it into a proof that he should not retire earlier than the rest of the family; and as he was to sleep in a light closet adjoining to Mr. St. Paul's lodging-room, would consequently have a neighbour when he took possession of his new apartment: this *neighbour* I suppose Matt considered as a spell against the "elves and fairies" of the place; for whatever bravery the little hero had shewn when his sisters mentioned

tioned the Abbey ghosts, he had yet too much nursery legend floating on his brain to have the smallest doubt of their existence.

Poor Matt's conjectures and hopes, alas! proved erroneous, for the house-keeper, Mrs. Mary Johnson, was called to attend him to his *petite loge* a very short time after he had finished his repast.

The matron was not very well calculated to appease his childish fears, for she firmly believed that *nuns without heads*, *bald-pated friars*, and many equally terrific appearances, kept their vigils pretty frequently within the walls of the Abbey, and attributed every creak of the ancient wainscot, every motion of the old tapestry or the crazy casements, to some supernatural agency.

Luckily



Luckily no explanation took place between the credulous old lady and her juvenile charge; probably the latter thought himself too much a man to acknowledge his apprehensions, and Mary was too humane to run the risk of terrifying the poor child unnecessarily.

With the last ray which fell on the eyes of Mathew from the retreating housekeeper's candle, departed all the poor fellow's resolution—he trembled most exceedingly, covered himself entirely with the bedclothes, and had not pride come to his relief, would have certainly called the old woman back. His agitations were not, however, of a long duration—the drowsy god soon routed them, and lulled him to that sweet repose which ever lights upon the lids of innocence.

"*Bon soir*, dear boy!" I cannot forbear exclaiming.

After Matt had retired from the hall, and whilst Sympson was quaffing his apportioned *quantum* of punch, the venerable squire opened to his companion his views and designs respecting the recently-imported member of his family. Six-and-eightpence, as may be supposed (for he possessed a truly grateful heart), was ready to declare that every exertion should be used to sow the seeds of *sound law* in the mind of his proposed pupil. This, though highly acceptable, did not give Mr. St. Paul half the gratification he received from his visitor's unsolicited declaration, that Matt was the exact image of the picture "*in green*," in the "*low parlour*."

"Do you think so? do you think  
so?"

so?" exclaimed the squire. "Egad, Sympson, I believe you are right. Yes, yes—Mathew has certainly somewhat of the same cast of features. To-morrow, when you conclude your initiatory lecture, you shall compare him with my portrait—ay, and you shall see him attired in the same costume."

Sympson looked incredulous, for he knew not of the favourite suit's existence, and he did not suppose a *fac simile* to it, from the village tailor, could be so rapidly completed; but he expressed not his opinion, and, according to his usual practice when doubtful what answer to return, had recourse to his already-commemorated snuff-pocket.

Mr. St. Paul smoked one solitary pipe after Sympson quitted him, and during

its continuance mentally colloquized much to the following effect:—

“Matt certainly resembles our family: if I find the likeness still more remarkable when he is dressed for comparison to-morrow in my antique green-and-gold habit, I shall be breaking through my resolution by nominating him my successor here. But, hang it! that will not do either: poor boy! it might be his ultimate ruin; for I have observed through life, that not one of your *assured expectants* in a thousand turns out well—they scarcely ever apply to those studies which might properly fit them for their station in life; their constant prayer is for the death of those who detain their inheritance from them, and when the tiresome old dog is off, they

they cannot content themselves with dancing over his grave, but curse him for having made such a late retreat.—

Matt shall not know my present disposition in his favour—he shall study the law, and I prognosticate he will rise in the profession; at any rate, his legal information will qualify him admirably for the commission of the peace; and no character in the world can be more useful than a well-informed country justice.”

With such contemplations working in his mind he lay down upon his pillow, and they produced, as might naturally be expected, visions in which little Matt performed a principal part—he saw the armorial bearings of the St. Pauls waving over the woolsack of a lord-high-chancellor of England; no wonder he arose from his bed more de-

terminated than ever that the profession which Mathew's name had suggested should be that in which he must positively be initiated.

CHAP-

## CHAPTER V.

~~~~~

It was, I weene, a comely sight
To see sae trim a boy.

OLD BALLAD.

.....

———Alas! to make me
A fixed figure, for the hand of Scorn
To point his slow unmoving finger at!

SHAKESPEARE.

THE visions which appeared to Matt's imagination were not by any means of that terrific nature which might have been expected, when we recollect the state of mind in which he went to sleep: the idea of the pony which he flattered

F 4

himself

himself his old cousin would allow him, put to flight the whole host of ghosts and goblins; on this delightful hobby-horse he conceived himself mounted—on it he was indulging his baby-brother with a ride—on it he beheld himself journeying to Marton, the object of universal envy.

By seven in the morning he awoke, and in a moment bounded from his bed, and with the ardent curiosity inseparable from his years, immediately unclosed the leaded casement to survey the prospect.

As if to insure the continuance of that happy flow of spirits in which he had opened his eyes, it was not one of those dismal hazy mornings which too frequently forerun November's drear approach; on the contrary, the sun was
rising

rising amidst an almost cloudless sky, and gilded the half-leafless trees, the sombre evergreens, and a generally gloomy-looking water which flowed under arches through the Abbey, with a brilliance rarely observable in the latter days of autumn.

A robin carolled his soft harmonious lay from a distant buttress; its little voice was certainly an evidence that summer had gone by, but at the same time the distance whence the song was heard cheered the mind with an assurance that winter was not yet near enough to necessitate the sweet warbler to chirp for his daily meal at the open windows of our dwellings.

There is something in scenes like this which rivets the attention of many of all ages, who would pass unheeding by

a gayer prospect; even Mathew, young as he was, surveyed it with such fixed attention, that he perceived not Mr. St. Paul's entrance into his apartment until he touched him on the shoulder.

He was soon equipped for descending to Mrs. Mary's parlour, where they breakfasted. The meal was obviously hurried over by the old gentleman, which being contrary to his general custom, I can only ascribe to his eagerness for introducing Matt into the library, or his anxiety to behold him arrayed in the green-and-gold suit which Kester Hilton had on the preceding night received positive orders to have well aired against the morning: both these important points were accomplished within a quarter of an hour from the conclusion of the morning repast.

The

The clothes, even to the laced hat, fitted to admiration: the old squire was so delighted with the child's appearance, and, more than all, with the striking likeness he now bore to his own portrait, that, according to his former apprehension, it was with difficulty he repressed expressions respecting his intended heir, which would have been highly favourable to Mathew's chance of succession; he was probably prevented by hearing the housekeeper talking to Sympson whilst she was conducting him up stairs.

"Six-and-eightpence never pleased me better, in the whole course of our long acquaintance," said the squire to his humble friend Kester Hilton, "than by this early attendance, this obvious readiness to enter on his new charge. Tell Mary Johnson he dines with us

to-day; and take care, Kester, that his tankard foams with the best stuff in your cellar, and make some little addition to our accustomed allowance of punch."

Matt had barely time to inquire the reason for the appellation of "*Six-and-eightpence*," and hear it was bestowed by Mr. St. Paul, in allusion to a fee of that amount which, *in his day*, was not considered below the notice of the law gentry, before the bearer of the title entered. He could not restrain a smile, as he glanced his eye over Mathew in his extraordinary habit.

Instead of smiling, I fancy, reader, you or I should have burst into an involuntary fit of laughter: whether we should have been justified in this breach of good manners, I appeal to Hogarth's celebrated

celebrated print of "*Evening*," where the little fellow, who is receiving chastisement from a vixen sister, presents an exact counterpart (with the exception of the cockade) of Mathew St. Paul in the costume of his old cousin's youth.

As it never once entered into the head of Mr. St. Paul that his idolized green-and-gold suit could be regarded by any one in a ridiculous light, Sympton's smile was laid to the score of admiration; and this was decidedly proved, when the last-mentioned gentleman judiciously exclaimed—"Ah! my friend Christopher St. Paul grown young again? or has his picture become animated, and stepped down from the family-party?"

The display of Matt in his new clothes to Mrs. Mary and the other members of the

the Abbey family, seriously interfered with, though it did not altogether prevent, the young student's introduction to the library; little more indeed was done than a display of its ponderous *folio* volumes: this little, however, convinced Mr. Sympson, and raised a suspicion in the bosom of the old squire, that Mathew had not yet reached an age when even the *rudiments* of so intricate a study as jurisprudence could be sown in his mind with any thing like a certainty of their taking root. Mathew, as might be expected from his tender years, was in reality far more interested in his "*green-and-gold*" attire, than with sir Mathew Hale's likeness, or the numerous pages that succeeded it in his valuable works: he had yet, poor inexperienced boy! to learn the ridicule attached

tached to any striking deviation from the modes of the day—yet to contend against the laugh of his former school-fellows and contemporaries.

Sympson attended on the following day, but made little more progress with his juvenile pupil than he had done on that preceding it; the sight of the tremendous volumes he produced caused a heartache in Matt, which nothing his tutor could advance seemed able to alleviate.

“ Dear sir,” exclaimed the boy, in the simplicity of his heart, “ it is quite impossible, in *all my life*, to get through these monstrous books. Ovid, nay, the Greek Testament, where I had to turn over my lexicon for every word, was not half so frightful—*they* would have had

had an end, but these, *these* never, *never* can."

The law preceptor came—Mat was closeted with him day after day during the succeeding week, but not a page could they get through with attention: the moment Sympson turned his head another way, the careless pupil was going back to the copperplate frontispiece of the work before him; even the "*green-and-gold*" habiliments which he was sentenced to wear until a new suit of black, in the same form, should be completed at the tailor's, by degrees lost their charms, and Matt secretly pined for home, and wished himself again in company with his playmates at Marton.

Sunday completed the poor lad's disgust with the regulations of Napperton,
for

for on that day, dressed in his gay apparel, he was ordered to appear at divine service in the parish church. The congregation were generally pretty early in their attendance; Matt did not arrive until they were mostly seated.

Picture to yourself, reader, a child of ten years old, clad in the extraordinary fashion of the early part of the last century: his coat was buttoned with jet from the neck to the skirt; the laps expanded from his hips, as if upborne by a hoop; the sleeves were so large as to exhibit his shirt nearly to the elbow: his fringed and embroidered cravat was exactly similar to that in which we have already introduced the old squire; his breeches reached not to his knees; square-toed and high-heeled shoes, with brilliant buckles, ornamented his feet, and

and under his arm he carried a triangular cocked hat. Imagine this *outré* figure proceeding through the middle aisle of a country church, followed by a grey-headed servant in dress almost as preposterous, and you will readily credit me, when I assure you that not a countenance beheld them without exhibiting a grin; even the parson, who had already mounted the desk, was obliged to have recourse to the sleeve of his surplice and a convenient “*hem! hem!*” to conceal his risibility.

Mathew fancied (his age and inexperience will excuse him) that he could be nothing but the object of admiration; many others every day, who are *voluntarily* far more ridiculously accoutered, deceive themselves in a similar way: look in the Bond-street of London, the
Milsom-

Milsom-street of Bath, the Stayne of Brighton, and you will find examples *ad infinitum*.

Matt's agreeable delusion continued until the loud laugh and boisterous vociferation of a crowd of boys whom he passed in the churchyard made him suspect that there must be something extraordinary, if not absurd, in his appearance: this was decidedly proved by the exclamations of a considerable party, who pursued him more than half way home. Amidst the confusion of tongues a few truly provoking sentences occasionally reached his ears:—

“ Lord, what a comical old-fashioned chap!” cried one—“ it must be Mr. Punch, as acted at B——— fair.”

“ I lay twopence,” bawled another,
“ it's

"it's the little count as dad saw at York races."

"Nay, marry," said a third, "it's none else but maister Matt St. Paul. Why *I* would not be made sike a seet on for all the old squire's money."

"What fine fun we should have with him," observed another, "if he was to come to school in this *tom-tate-dry* pickle! We would soon pick his feathers for him---ha! ha! ha!"

In the last speaker poor Matt recognized a schoolfellow, with whom he had been particularly intimate.

It was in vain that Kester used every effort to restore silence and disperse the throng; his endeavours only excited new merriment and increased the noise.---
Matt's mind was quite in a ferment; he
longed

longed most heartily to turn round and give some of the ringleaders a sound drubbing; but then there were so many, and such a number of big fellows!— Luckily it was the village dinner-hour, which checked the progress of his tormentors, or most likely they would have followed him even to the gates of the Abbey.

“ Oh, Kester !” cried he, and he could no longer repress his tears, “ I cannot bear this—I will never put on these frightful clothes again. Do, do beg and beseech my good old cousin to let me be dressed like other boys.”

Kester was sufficiently attached to the “ *young squire*” (as he was already christened in the kitchen) to have undertaken this cause, could he have done so with any probability of success; but,
from

from a long experience of his venerable master's pertinacity on certain favourite points, he was aware that interference would, in the present instance, be unavailing; all he could do was to endeavour to reconcile the mortified boy to his singular clothing, by suggesting it was merely the novelty of his dress which excited notice, and that, in a Sunday or two, he would pass along uninterrupted.

Mathew was so far from believing this, that he privately meditated a precipitate retreat to Marton, at the hazard of his father's displeasure, in preference to being exhibited again in Napperton church.

“ Papa and mamma,” thought the little reasoner, “ will be glad enough to see me in their hearts, I know, whatever they

they may say at first; and William, and George, and they all, will be quite delighted—and then I shall escape these great ugly books.”

He was almost decided, but he resolved first, as Kester seemed to decline it, to state his grievances to Mr. St. Paul, and petition for redress.

The old gentleman met him in the garden-court, and did not require words to inform him that his *protégé* had met with some disagreeable occurrence—Matt’s ingenuous countenance displayed mortification in most legible characters.

Explanation ensued. The squire pronounced Mathew to be a *weak boy*, for attending to what he considered the result of envy at seeing him dressed as a gentleman’s son *ought* to be. Matt boldly declared he would not go through
what

what he had done in returning from church that morning for the world.— Dinner put a partial stop to the dispute.

At the usual time came old Sympton to smoke his Sunday-evening pipe at the Abbey: the offended squire was ready with his complaints against poor Matt; Six-and-eightpence charitably pleaded the boy's extreme youth, and observed that he did not wonder at his bad taste in dress, when he called to mind he had not discernment enough to appreciate the delights arising from such an *imposing* study as the law.

It was finally settled that time would reconcile the young gentleman to his clothing and his *entertaining* studies, and that the way to hasten this longed-for period was to accustom him, by daily use, to the former, and to smoothe the
passage

passage to the other by confining their present "*readings*" to the lives of the most celebrated civilians, which, whilst it afforded amusement, would most probably inspire the youthful tyro with a desire of devoting himself to a profession by which so many have been elevated to the very pinnacle of human greatness.

Matt was privately confident that time would *not* have any of this wonderful influence, but he had the policy to keep this opinion to himself.

On Monday morning he rose from his bed before seven o'clock, and manfully resolved not to resume the obnoxious suit: he had observed the wardrobe where Mary Johnson deposited the things he wore on arriving at Napperton, and in those, let what would prove the consequence, he determined to array

VOL. I. G himself.

himself. He tried the doors of the press—they opened, but, alas! not an article of his late raiment appeared: it would have been miraculous if any of it had been found there, for, by order of the benevolent squire, the whole had been presented to an indigent family in the village, the very day after Matt's assumption of his old cousin's green coat. Thus, contrary to his resolves, the unfortunate boy was compelled once more to dress himself as gentlemen's sons appeared fourscore years ago.

I cannot say much for the radiant smiles which illumined his countenance at breakfast; he had yet to attain the worldly art of wearing the sign of contentment written on his brow, whilst his heart swelled almost to bursting with directly contrary feelings. This
gloom

gloom was not unobserved, though it passed unreprieved, for Mr. St. Paul and Mrs. Mary regarded it as nothing more than a cloud which might be naturally enough expected to arise, and would as naturally pass away, and be seen no more.

Matt, it appears, had more decision about him than the old lady and gentleman calculated upon, for, at the time when Sympson expected his attendance in the library, he was sneaking along, by the most unfrequented road, to Marton.

CHAPTER VI.

~~~~~

————— There's one  
Has plac'd himself upon your sacred hearth,  
Beneath the dread protection of your lares,  
And sits mysteriously in solemn silence.

THOMSON.

It happened on the morning of the lately-recorded memorable "hegira" from Napperton Abbey, that Mr. and Mrs. William St. Paul were conversing on the subject of their absent child, and congratulating themselves that they heard nothing contradictory to his ready domestication in the family of their old cousin.

" Bless

"Bless me!" exclaimed Mrs. William, who had accidentally turned her eyes to a window commanding a view of the high road—"Bless me! what oddity have we got here?"

Mr. William looked in the same direction with his wife, but, owing to an intervening hedge, was too late to discern more of the attractive figure approaching than his cocked hat.

"He must be a dwarfish gentleman," observed he, "or yon low quickwood could not hide so much of him. But he will emerge from the shade soon, for he is fast advancing to the sunk fence at the bottom of the garden, and must pass it, if he be journeying to the village."

He was *not* "journeying to the village," nor did he "pass the sunk fence:"

he opened the garden gate, and presented the well-known but dejected countenance of their son Mathew.

Mr. William arose with an air which threatened no very agreeable reception to the wayfaring boy, for, on seeing him unattended, he concluded he returned in disgrace, and had probably taken a French leave of the inhabitants of Napperton Abbey, and by so doing must have irreconcilably offended old Mr. St. Paul.

“ I enter into your fears, my love,” said Mrs. William, placing her hand gently on her husband’s arm, “ and conclude with you, that the poor fellow has either offended or *been* offended.”

“ *Been* offended! Mrs. William,” cried papa—“ it seems then that my parting injunctions made but a very slight

slight impression, for I charged him, at the risk of my everlasting displeasure, ‘*not to be offended*,’ but, on the contrary, to pay undeviating obedience to every wish and command of our old cousin.”

“Remember,” resumed mamma, with a supplicating look, “the ‘*stiffness of opinion*’ from which we anticipated an interference with Matt’s settlement at the Abbey; remember, too, his youth and inexperience may have magnified some trifle into a serious grievance: he may yet be reinstated in the old gentleman’s good graces—you must be the mediator, William, dear William.”

“Our good cousin’s ‘*stiffness in opinion*’ will, I fear, render any thing I can do ineffectual,” said Mr. St. Paul.

“Far from attempting to mediate, I

scarcely know how to venture on visiting the Abbey without special invitation; I set it down, Margaret, for certain, that we have lost all chance of Mr. St. Paul's favour—all my sanguine hopes are dashed to the ground, 'like water that cannot be gathered up again.'

They every moment expected to see the delinquent open the door: he came not: this was confirmation strong of something being wrong.

Mr. William, anxious to know the worst, proceeded instantly to an apartment detached from the house, and designated the "school-room;" there he found Matt in his masquerade habit, seeking the protection of his paternal "*lares*,"—*Anglice*, hovering over the dying embers of a fire, "all melancholy musing." He obviously shrunk from observation;



observation; whatever he *thought* himself, he seemed conscious of appearing a culprit in the eyes of his father.

"Well, sir," said Mr. William St. Paul, "and to what cause am I to attribute your appearance here?"

Not without a faltering articulation, though with a firmness seldom met with in a childish offender, he ingenuously and without reserve commenced a narrative of the trials he had gone through—"I could not, papa," added he, "I really could not bear to be so laughed at; and then I am quite sure I never could have got through all the monstrous books which Mr. St. Paul wished me to read. I tried and tried, but could not understand them; and you know, papa, it would have been very naughty

in me to pretend I read them, when I really could not."

When Mr. William looked upon his little boy's extraordinary dress, he could not but regard it very likely to render him ridiculous; he then called to mind what would have been his own feelings in similar circumstances, and at a similar age: thus thinking, he mentally pardoned the little criminal, but he thought it not right to make a visible display of mercy's "*ivory sceptre*" immediately; on the contrary, he assumed an austerity of air, and said—"You are truly, as your old cousin named you, a very weak boy to act as you have done, and, for such an insignificant cause, offend so kind a friend as worthy Mr. St. Paul; you must therefore accompany me back  
to

to him, and by future obedience endeavour to atone for the past."

"Oh, papa! papa!" cried Mathew, "pray do not ask this of me—I cannot be happy at the Abbey. Let Will or George go; perhaps they may like it better than I have done."

"At any rate," thought Mr. William, "I must go to Napperton, and without delay, otherwise I never can expect reconciliation with '*my old cousin*.'"

Whilst he was thus determining on a visit to the Abbey, a servant announced the arrival of Kester Hilton. Mr. William hastened down to receive him, almost as eagerly as he would have done to his aged master.

Kester was delighted to find the child safe at Marton.—"He has put us into a strange fuss at the Abbey, I assure you,

master William," said the old domestic; "we have been dragging the pends and ferreting into every hole and corner to seek him."

"I shall take the ungrateful boy back without delay," said Mr. William.

"That will be quite useless, sir," returned Kester, "for I know master so well, that I dare venture to swear he will never have him again."

"I shall go, however, friend Kester," exclaimed the disappointed father; "and if you think your master will not be displeased with your staying here till my return, I will thank you to do so; for, if he *should* agree to Matt's return, you can reconduct him to the Abbey very easily."

"To stay here till you come back I will readily venture," said Hilton; "but  
*depend*

*depend* upon it, sir, I shall receive no orders for taking master Mathew home with me to the Abbey; master abominates runaways, and never was known to pardon one in the whole course of his life. I do firmly believe that if old Cerby the housedog was to take off for a night, and he's a prime favourite, he would be hanged for his pains in the morning."

In a few minutes Mr. William was on horseback, and galloping on the road to his old cousin's residence.

"I know, from your countenance," said squire St. Paul, "that the child is safe, and I am right truly glad of it, for he has given me more uneasiness in two hours than I ever felt throughout my long life; but no matter—it's over, and I hope I shall be no worse for it. What  
a foolish

a foolish lad he was, to act as he has done! Had he but uttered one syllable significant of a wish to return to you, I would have sent him off the next minute; I never keep a creature in my house against their inclination."

Mr. William said every thing of an apologetic nature which might be expected from a parent situated like himself, and ended with observing that he would bring the young truant back again, and answer for his future good conduct.

The squire would not hear a word of such an arrangement—"No, no," said he, "I am not a friend to compulsion—volunteers are my favourites; besides, I have long determined never to readmit a deserter into my *corps*. But however, cousin William, to shew that I do not  
blame

blame or am offended at you in this disagreeable business, I am ready to make trial of *another* of your boys. What say you to trusting me with your youngest? perhaps I may find him more to my purpose than sir Mathew. As to my visions of woolsacks and lord-high-chancellors, they must float away after the manner of all other air-built castles. Rodney, I think you call him, will be wax more likely to receive my impressions than could be expected from a boy of ten years old."

Mr. William expressed extreme readiness to comply with what he considered his old cousin's kind and generous proposal, and determined, however trying it must prove, to give up his pet, rather than lose all chance of his family succeeding to the demesne of Napperton.

" You

" You know me to be a sanguine impatient old fellow," said the ancient squire, " therefore, I need scarcely say, the sooner you send the little gentleman the better."

" Kester can bring him, if you please, sir," cried Mr. William, " for he will remain at Marton till my return thither."

It was agreed, *nem. con.* and very soon after away rode our anxious father.

Mrs. William St. Paul had been so hurried with the events of the day, that she had scarce time to reflect upon the sacrifice required of her, before she beheld her little darling mounted before old Kester, on Mr. St. Paul's black horse, Sampson.

Mr. William had hurried over the affair of Rodney's departure, under pretence of obliging Mr. St. Paul, but in  
reality



reality in order to spare his beloved wife from the generally lengthened tortures of separation.

**CHAP.**

CHAPTER VII.  
~~~~~

Won by their care, the lovely child
Soon on his new protectors smil'd,
With dimpled cheek and eye so fair,
Through his thick curls of flaxen hair.

WALTER SCOTT.

RODNEY, buoyant with a childish love of change, evinced not the smallest symptom of chagrin at his proposed removal from Marton; on the contrary, he was all impatience to see the horse at the gate, on which he was to ride before old Kester to Napperton Abbey.

The introduction of our young traveller

veller at the house of the squire shall not, reader, rest assured, be so tediously detailed as was that of his brother Matthew; we have not now to introduce you *pro formâ* to "*my old cousin*" or Mrs. Mary St. Paul, or to cicerone you through the curious apartments of their dwelling; with these we consider you perfectly at home: suffice it then to say, that Mr. St. Paul cordially shook hands with his new inmate, praised his appearance extremely, called him his little "*white-headed boy*," at the same time stroking his brows, which were liberally covered with waving ringlets of the lightest flaxen. In addition to these testimonies of approbation, he declared that, however like Matt had been considered to the often-quoted picture in "*green-and-gold*," Rodney's countenance presented

presented a much more faithful resemblance of it. Mrs. Mary, too, was particularly gracious, and opened her corner cupboard with unusual alacrity, to present the interesting stranger with a retaining fee in the shape of home-made gingerbread and preserves.

Rodney looked as he felt, honest fellow, highly gratified, and did not appear in the least alarmed when Mr. St. Paul addressed him as "*the young admiral.*"

"You were baptized, no doubt," said he, "in compliment to our gallant admiral Rodney, and it shall be your own fault if you do not, in due time, cull similar laurels. Will you be a sailor, my dear little fellow?" interrogated he.

"Oh, yes—indeed I will," exclaimed the child, with unaffected *naïveté*—"I should like it vastly; I saw such pretty ships

ships at Scarborough, and longed to be in them so, sir, you can't think!—Yes, sir, I will be a sailor—I am sure I will."

Rodney had been with his father's family at Scarborough in the course of the preceding summer, and had beheld the vast ocean gilded with reflexions from an almost cloudless sky, unruffled by the stormy blast; he had gazed on myriads of vessels, with their silvery-white canvas swelled by gentle gales, passing and repassing, and he dreamt not of the dangers of the great deep, its direful tempests, its rocks, its quicksands. Who, but for these tremendous perils, would not plough the ocean, and visit all the *nations* of the earth?

With the arrival of Rodney at Naperton Abbey vanished Mr. St. Paul's romantic anticipations of a lord-high-chancellor

cellor of England arising from the scions of his family-tree; but in their place, I cannot deny, sprung hopes almost as airy—the squire now assured himself that an admiral of the blue or the white was submitted to his training hand.

When the child had retired to sleep, Mrs. Mary ventured on remarking—“If, brother, you should hereafter think fit to make this boy your successor here, it were a pity he should be brought up to the sea.”

“He will be ready enough to resign so precarious a profession, Mary, for the secure harbour of Napperton Abbey, depend upon it; so don’t trouble yourself about my present destination of him,” returned “*my old cousin,*” and they parted for the night.

Sympson called in the morning, not
with

with an idea of instructing his quondam pupil, for he was aware of his flight, but from a laudable desire of assuaging the irritation of his disappointed patron's feelings: he was, in heart and soul, the warm friend of Mr. William, and, could he have influenced the ancient proprietor of Napperton Abbey, would have secured its inheritance to the St. Pauls of Marton. He was truly happy at finding Matt's vacated seat occupied by his brother Rodney; and by no means sorry to hear (though it would lose him many excellent dinners) that his law-preceptorship had terminated; in reality, from the juvenility of his pupil, he had always regarded it as a herculean labour, which, after all his exertions, could not be performed.

The pause during the afternoon-pipe
of

of old Mr. St. Paul, allowed time for a consultation with his friend Six-and-eightpence as to the most likely way of inspiring little Rodney with a desire of preparing himself for his intended profession.

Sympson, much to the satisfaction of the sanguine squire, very opportunely recollected a superannuated lieutenant of the royal navy, who resided in a neighbouring market town, and, according to his report, appeared particularly competent to improve the young gentleman's taste for nautical pursuits, being most enthusiastically devoted to the sea service, though he had gained nothing more by it than a pittance of a pension and a wooden leg. His name was Hatchway, possibly a relation of the amusing tar immortalized by Dr. Smollet: be
that

that as it may, I can only remark, that for good qualities of the heart, and loyalty to his king and country, not a Hatchway in the world could surpass him. He was soon after introduced at the Abbey, and from the readiness with which he entered into the squire's views respecting master Rodney's education, in a very short time was enrolled among the old gentleman's principal favourites.

The plan with which he commenced his operations was certainly well calculated to insure eventual success: Rodney had already an earnest desire for more intimate acquaintance with the "pretty ships" he had beheld off Scarborough; Hatchway produced *petites specimens* of them, from the first-rate man-of-war to the most insignificant sloop; of these he pointed out the

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different parts and their specific uses—not a sail or rope but was repeatedly dwelt upon and named. The amusement which the child received from these exhibitions and conversations insured his attention to the ardent lecturer, and implanted deeply in the pupil's mind a fixed determination to behold these objects at full length, which thus delighted him in miniature.

From ships they proceeded to the adventures of men who, by means of them, had in former days performed voyages which appeared miraculous, and visited countries which were then only believed to exist in the heated imaginations of the credulous and visionary.

Rodney was naturally of a romantic and enterprising spirit, so these lessons, far from appearing irksome, were a
means

means of reconciling him completely to the Abbey and its peculiar regulations, and effectually attracted his attention from the antique costume which, like his brother Matt, he was compelled to assume. Mr. and Mrs. William St. Paul were of course beyond measure gratified with the report of their little Rodney's happiness, which he failed not to give in whenever they saw him.

The profession for which he was intended at the first was far from an agreeable contemplation to them, for there are few fathers and mothers, particularly inland people, who can think of trusting a favourite son to the multiform dangers and uncertainties of the capricious ocean, without an involuntary shudder—a shudder, too, which does not easily subside.

In the present instance, Mr. William very judiciously appeased the natural anxiety of his wife, by pointing out the indispensable necessity there was for drummoring the old gentleman with the entire guidance and direction of their little boy, if they ever expected him or any of his brothers to succeed to Naperton.—"From the advanced age," added he, "of *'my old cousin,'* it is not very likely he should survive the accomplishment of his projects respecting Rodney, and in that case, if the little fellow should prove the heir, it is not probable he will feel inclined to quit the secure enjoyments of so fine an estate for the precarious existence of a sailor."

Soothed by those and similar arguments, Mrs. William became perfectly reconciled

reconciled to the situation of her youngest child, and could hear of, nay, converse respecting the nautical lessons which occupied all his time and attention, without feeling any particular anxiety.

Neither could Mr. Sharkem be enumerated among the malcontents (if any such existed) on Rodney's establishment at Napperton; to be candid, he was abundantly pleased with Mathew's substitute. Matt had been designed for his own knowing profession, and probably, in a few years, under the tutelage of Sympson, whose legal information he knew to be highly respectable, would have become a dangerous observer of *certain views* which we may perhaps not inaptly entitle *anticipative contemplations* respecting the future inherit-

ance of Napperton estates; Rodney, on the other hand, was destined to a calling which must necessarily draw him, at a very early age, almost entirely from the society of his friends in England.

After these hints, the reader will not suspect the prosperous attorney of insincerity, when he is informed that his first exclamation to Mr. St. Paul after Matt's departure was highly complimentary to the embryo admiral.

“ My dear, worthy, and most excellent friend,” said he, “ I congratulate and give you joy, much and truly, on the arrival and appearance of this juvenile stranger: his countenance has sufficient of a St. Paul stamped and written legibly upon it to insure *his* worth and ~~your~~ generous patronage; there is something at the same time about him which

evidences,

evidences, testifies, and bears witness, according to my poor trifling skill in the art or science of physiognomy, that he possesses a fearless intrepidity of character, peculiarly, entirely adapted to the profession which, with your usual, nay, unfailing discernment, you have recommended. He will, he *must*, my worthy, invaluable friend and neighbour, rise to the very summit, the very apex of naval glory."

The honey dew of flattery is so palatable, that it may be administered in wonderfully large doses without cloying the stomach, otherwise the last recorded speech would have disgusted instead of gratified our old friend the squire. I would not have it inferred from this opinion that Mr. St. Paul (though ninety) was more easily gulled than the

generality of his neighbours. Consider, reader, all-sapient as you doubtless are, how readily you present an open ear to the sensible voice of that character who appears similarly opinioned with yourself on any darling point; though he speak in rather figurative language, you consider him as nothing inferior to "*a second Daniel*."

In the case before us, the experienced Sharkem prophesied events which his friend *hoped* for, perhaps *prayed* for; how then could he avoid listening, listening with delight, to such flattering vaticinations, and believing they would in due time be accomplished in every particular?

As a confirmation that his predilection for the sea service was deeply sown, Rodney entered with all possible energy
upon

upon his new studies, and listened hour after hour, with unwearied attention, to the harangues of Mr. Hatchway, who, like other veteran tars, was never tired of fighting "his battles o'er again." He sailed under Vernon in 1739, and few important engagements took place, from that period until the defeat of count de Grasse by admiral Rodney, in which he had not borne a part. At first his discourses were rather too much larded with technical phraseology to be clearly comprehended; this soon, however, ceased to be the case, for in a very few months, such was the little St. Paul's unremitting attention, he became equally familiar with the sea terms as with every part of the seventy-four which was moored for his instruction and amusement in the fish-pond.

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We can all recollect times when Robinson Crusoe and Peter Wilkins's wonderful adventures were perused with enthusiastic rapture—when our little heart panted within us as we read, and, whilst we trembled at their danger, felt something like a longing to “go down to the sea in ships, and see the wonders of the great deep.” Such, nay infinitely more ardent, were the feelings of our young friend Rodney, whilst he turned over or listened to voyages of discovery, accounts of battles the most honourable to Britannia's fame, or the lives and achievements of renowned naval officers; he not only felt the longing I have (and I believe with justice) ascribed to the generality of youthful readers of romantic peril, but determinately fixed upon encountering the dangers of the seas, and

and looked forward to the years which must necessarily elapse before he could sail forth in quest of adventures, as a prospect which, like an unobstructed view of the ocean, seemed to him interminable.

CHAPTER VIII.

But blytheſt laugh'd that cheek and eye
When Rokeby's little maid was nigh :

• • • • •

Primroſe he twin'd with daisy fair
To form a chaplet for her hair ;
By lawn, by grove, by brooklet's ſtrand,
The children ſtill were hand in hand ;
And good ſir Richard ſmiling eyed
The early knot ſo kindly tied.

WALTER SCOTT.

ONLY thoſe who have been engaged in
a darling purſuit with ſuch enthuſiaſm
as to render it

“ Their daily viſion and their dream by night,”

can

can suppose the celerity (notwithstanding his fears to the contrary) with which, according to Rodney's conception, the six years succeeding his establishment at Napperton Abbey glided away. At their conclusion, little, if any alteration was traceable in the persons or situations of old Mr. St. Paul's household, unless we except the rapid growth, increased information, and confirmed predilection for the sea service evidently conspicuous in his *protégé*; the ancient worthy still flourished like a healthy evergreen in full foliage; though in the winter of extreme age, Mrs. Mary's rheumatics had not made a deeper inroad into her constitution than when we left her; Sympson continued his visits, lieutenant Hatchway was unremittingly busy with the education of his attentive scholar, and

Mr.

Mr. Sharkem seemed, with each revolving day, to increase in attention and kindness. The neighbours, with their usual lack of charitable interpretation, ascribed this marked assiduity to motives far from disinterested, and complimented their own sagacity highly when they whispered it from circle to circle, that the cunning lawyer was manoeuvring to lay the foundation of an attachment between the little sailor and his daughter Fanny, which must lead to their marriage and the ultimate succession of his descendants to the envied domains of Napperton: what rendered this conjecture plausible was, that Frances Sharkem almost invariably accompanied her papa to Mr. St. Paul's, and spent the time of her sojourning there in rambling about with Rodney, or
viewing

viewing *admiral Hatchway's fleet* riding at anchor in the Abbey fish-ponds.

“And how, pray, can we account for this arrangement, when Mr. Sharkem has sons who go with him everywhere else, except by attributing it to a desire of throwing his little girl as much as possible in the way of the presumptive heir of Napperton?” was the general interrogation.

Another demonstrative proof of the correctness of these suspicions was the peculiar interest which the attorney seemed to take in every thing which concerned the old squire's favourite; he was perpetually inviting him to his house, presenting him with books, charts, quadrants, models of ships, &c.; and when he heard Hatchway announce his pupil as fully competent to the duties of
of

of a midshipman, without waiting for a request from Mr. St. Paul, during one of his frequent professional visits to London applied at the Admiralty, and procured him an appointment on board one of his majesty's first-rate men-of-war.

Nothing could have pleased the old squire of Napperton half so much as this unsolicited attention to his darling scheme, for it almost insured him (which, at his great age, was all that could be reasonably expected) an opportunity of witnessing his adopted child's introduction to his profession, and gave a chance for observing his progress in it.

If Sharkem's officiousness was merely designed to gratify his ancient friend and neighbour, he must have been abundantly repaid by hearing him exclaim, after

after his return from town—"This is truly kind and attentive, Sharkem; I shall feel eternally obliged by it. The lad shall most certainly accept the appointment; old as I am, I will go with him to Portsmouth, and if you can spare time from business, you shall be the companion of our journey."

As may be expected, Sharkem's answer was to this purport:—"Business, my dear, worthy, ever-excellent friend, never has been, and I trust never will be let, hindrance, obstacle, or impediment in the way of my obliging, serving, and obeying you at all times, seasons, periods, occasions, and opportunities. At an hour's notice I shall be ready to attend you and our promising little Rodney."

Again, if the solicitor's views extend-
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ed as far as the ingenious gossips imagined, even to the remote prospect of a union between two children now only ten years of age, these juvenile objects of his solicitude appeared anxious to convince him he was by no means labouring in vain, for they evinced, from the very first of their acquaintance, every ostensible proof of a deep-rooted attachment: no toil appeared wearisome, no adventure perilous to Rodney, when happiness could be procured to little Fanny; not an apple, walnut, or bird's nest, on which she cast the eye of desire, was perched high enough to be beyond our young hero's squirrel-like agility; his favourite first-rate man-of-war was christened (by breaking a bottle of his old cousin's best October on her stern) "*The lovely Fanny*;" his fleet-footed

footed greyhound, of major Topham's true Snowball breed, was entitled "*Miss Sharkem's Delight*."

In return for these and similarly-acceptable services and compliments, Fanny was always ready to smile a sweet reward upon master Rodney St. Paul; at the dancing-school she never performed her steps with half the required grace or exactness if he were not her partner; the walnut, filbert, or apple, were thrown away untasted, or *had no flavour*, unless presented by his hand.

That this mutually-conspicuous *penchant* was equally understood and approved by old Mr. St. Paul, appears quite certain, from his repeatedly distinguishing Fanny Sharkem by the epithet of "*Rodney's little wife*:" this designation was at the same time generally succeeded

succeeded by one quite as acceptable to those who had the interest of Rodney at heart, for it encouraged a confident hope that he was certainly designed to inherit Napperton.

“When ‘*our admiral*’ has struck his flag, and come to anchor for life,” would the old gentleman exclaim over his evening punch, “Fanny promises fair to render Napperton Abbey as pleasant as I trust it will prove a secure harbour against the storms of life.”

From the day on which the young sailor’s appointment on board the ——— was announced at Napperton, the greatest activity prevailed, both there and at Marton, in those departments by whose exertions he was to be equipped for sea: every needle was soon in requisition; even the sweet Fanny contributed her mite

mite to her beloved mariner's stores, for she sent in six black silk neckkerchiefs, neatly hemmed and marked by her own pretty fingers: this present was of course highly acceptable, and not the less so because it bore unequivocal vestiges that the tender-hearted sempstress had moistened it with her tears. With true lover-like gratitude, Rodney repaid this gift with a cornelian necklace, centered by a pendent double heart, which he tied on himself, and ventured to accompany with a tender salute.

Poor Mrs. William St. Paul was grievously afflicted when she found that, contrary to her wishes, her youngest hope was about to embark in the perils of a sailor's life.—“ Ah!” sighed she, “ what a risk we run for the chance of the Napperton estates, which, after all, may,

may, through the caprice of their present proprietor, be left for the endowment of an 'old bachelor's hospital,' or some to us equally unimportant establishment!—Had I really anticipated Rodney's initiation into such a hazardous avocation, I would not have parted with him for the reversion of all our extensive county."

"My dear love," answered Mr. William to this and similar complaints, "do but consider the great probability that our boy may dislike the naval service, and quit it after a cruise or two: the same interest that obtained his appointment will easily procure his discharge. Remember, too, the chance, nay, almost certainty (if I do not totally misinterpret '*my old cousin's*' insinuations and Sharkem's repeated hints) of his compliance

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of old Mr. St. Paul's prophecies, which were impressed upon her mind by daily repetition; she saw, in her mind's eye, the object of her youthful love return, crowned with laurels, renowned for enterprise and discovery; she heard him relating exploits and adventures, miraculous and romantic as any on record; the gold lace of his well-earned uniform already glittered in her sight—his admiral's flag waved on the wings of the wind; more, ten thousand times more delightful than any of these reviving hopes, she felt herself pressed to the bosom of her hero, heard herself declared to the world his favourite, and seemed already his companion, the charmed audistress of his interesting narrations.

With such warm visions glowing on
her

her mind, it will not be regarded surprising that, though her tears flowed copiously and her sighs were deep, as she received her Rodney's last adieus, her heart felt not that inexpressible, almost suffocating pang, which rises when we contemplate, as if for the last time, a lover or a friend on the eve of being separated from us, for an indefinite space of time, by immeasurable leagues of ocean.

Wind and weather conspired to detain Rodney at Napperton Abbey several weeks beyond what was originally expected. Mrs. William, who, like a drowning person, snatched at the slenderest twig of hope, construed this into an omen that something would yet occur to prevent her little Rodney's departure.

parture. Alas! like many other equally sanguine anticipators, she was disappointed.

CHAP.

CHAPTER IX.
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Ah me ! ah never, never thence to part !  
How deep his form is imag'd in my heart !  
How ev'ry action to my sight appears !  
How ev'ry word still vibrates in my ears !

TASSO'S RINALDO.

THE morning at length came when Mr. St. Paul, accompanied by his cousin of Marton, old Sharkem, Hatchway, and the young sailor, set forward towards Portsmouth.

When it is recollected what an extent of country stretches out between the eastern division of the large county

of York and Hampshire, the reader will readily join me in considering this journey a most wonderful exertion for a man in his ninety-seventh year, as wonderful perhaps as many of those extraordinary feats which, in opposition to time, and every former calculation of human power and strength, have pretty frequently astonished the islanders of Britain during the last twenty years. That the venerable traveller completed his undertaking with ease, and without particular symptoms of fatigue, may probably be ascribed to that invigorating stimulus which seldom fails to keep alive the spirits when we draw near the completion of a long-cherished project.

Poor Mrs. William was far from sympathizing with the feelings of the old squire, for the moment the carriage which

which contained her son had driven from the door (for it called at Marton to allow of a parting embrace), the philosophy with which she seemed to press her darling to her bosom gave way to tears, lamentations, and painful feelings of self-accusation that she had allowed any consideration to elicit her consent to his departure; far from partaking of Miss Sharkem's delightful anticipations, to her perturbed fancy every circumstance respecting Rodney was in sombre shade; the sea on which he was about to embark presented nothing but boisterous waves never sated with devouring unfortunate mariners, quicksands that the most experienced navigators could not avoid, and rocks which, like the iron mountain of the Arabian Nights, or the magnetic island of Peter Wilkins,

irresistibly attracted every ship which approached them.

These and other equally painful considerations were fortunately diverted by the apropos arrival of Fanny Sharkem on her little pony. This amiable child, who loved Rodney with a degree of tenderness which, notwithstanding her romantic visions of the future, rendered parting from him agonizingly painful, not finding a bosom at home on which to sob out her grief and shed her "*natural tears*," without fear of ridicule rather than commiseration, no sooner lost sight of the carriage in which her favourite travelled, than she mounted her little horse for a morning's airing, and, attended by her accustomed groom, proceeded instantly to Marton.

On arriving there, without waiting  
for

for the ceremony of introduction, she tripped immediately up stairs to Mrs. William's boudoir. Floods of tears for several minutes prevented conversation; Fanny was the first who made her trembling accents heard.—“ Dear Mrs. St. Paul,” cried she, with a firmness at her age surprising, as it proved her exempt from the childish selfishness which generally attends to its own sufferings, to the utter neglect of those of others—“ my dear Mrs. St. Paul, I did not come to make you cry in this manner; I did not intend to cry so myself, but when I beheld you so afflicted, I could not help it. I came to talk to you more about Rodney's return than his going away, and how grown he would be and I should be, and how charming it would be to hear him tell of all he had seen,

and how pleased old Mr. St. Paul would be, and Mrs. Mary, and how——”

“You are a dear, good, obliging girl,” returned Mrs. William, “and I am sensible how much I owe you for this considerate attention. You must visit me as often as you can; the encouraging prospects you hold out will soften and even shorten Rodney’s absence more than any thing else can do.”

Fanny promised compliance, and Mrs. William reiterated her assurance how glad she should be to see her at all times and seasons.

The conference was here interrupted by one of the Miss St. Pauls, who had retired to a window in order to weep their mutual privation in secret, exclaiming——“Well, I declare, here is Mrs. Mary St. Paul’s old carriage drawing

ing



ing up to the garden-gate. I never knew her venture so far from Napper-ton Abbey before."

"How good it is of her!" said Mrs. William, smiling through her tears, like the sun through an April shower, "how *very* good of her to thus come and help you to comfort me, girls, in this my hour of trial!"

"Perhaps," said the young lady who spake before, with a sigh, "she may come with a hope of being comforted rather than *to comfort*; I am sure she must need the soothing balm, for I am certain she will find the want of our lively little Rodney most severely."

A moment's silence ensued; it was broken by the recent speaker, in language marked by emphasis which told more forcibly of astonishment than even

her announcement of the ancient spinster's supposed arrival from the Abbey. —“ Dear me!” cried she, “ after all, it is *not* Mrs. Mary—it is only the empty chaise.”

“ The empty chaise!” repeated Mrs. William; and the whole party, though not in the same words, yet to the same effect, and nearly in the same breath, added an opinion that the old lady must be ill, dying, or dead; and whichever might prove to be the case, attributed it entirely to the young sailor's departure.

The suspense under which they now laboured was not of very protracted duration, for it ended on the entrance of a note, the superscription of which proved that the venerable mistress of the Abbey was living, for it was written in  
that

that neat Italian character in fashion with our grandmothers.. Mrs. William read its contents aloud :—

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“ MY DEARE MADAM,

“ The loss of our precious Rodney, and the absence of my worthie brother, to which, throughout our length of daies, I have been but seldom accustomed, affect me so grievouslie, that I am fain to desire you to favour me with your good companie to-day, and if convenience suit—you see I am a right bold beggar—even until the return of your husband to Marton, and that of my still nearer kinsman; namely, my brother, to this his abode.

“ My humble friend and serving woman, Mary Johnson, informs me that Miss Frances Sharkem passed by the

Abbey this morning on her galloway, so I doubt not; but she is with you at the present: should this my conjecture prove well founded, bring her hither—I will endeavour to retaine her during your sojourn in this place, and shall send a petition to that effect forthwith to her mother. We cannot, as I am sure you are duly sensible, bear witness of regard to oure boy more properly than by attending to one he loves so true lie, and who, if I mistake not strangellie, will require oure caresses to reconcile her to her loss.

“ I pray God to have you and yours in his good and holie keeping, and rest your loving cousin and friend,

“ MARY SAINT PAUL.

“ *Dated at Napperton Abbey,  
this 22d day of July 1790.*”

“ I must

“ I must go most certainly,” cried Mrs. William, without waiting for comment or remark on her ancient kinswoman’s friendly epistle: “ will *you*, my dear Fanny, accompany me?”

“ Yes, madam,” returned the sweet girl, “ and I shall be so glad to do it! it is just what I wished. I should like, of all things in the world, to please good Mrs. Mary, and to do every possible thing for her, for she was always so kind, so *very* kind to poor Roddy!—I have heard him say a thousand times that he loved her next to you and——” *me* seemed upon her lip, but she did not articulate it plain enough to be quite audible; and as if anxious that her designed expression should escape notice altogether, added—“ his papa and his sisters, and——” again she left a hiatus,

tus, and again went on—"Mamma, I am sure, will have no objection, for she is never better pleased than when I go to the Abbey; so I shall venture to send John back with the pony and an account of where I may be found."

If we may be allowed to judge from the countenances of the Misses St. Paul, they were not, from some cause or other, over and above pleased with their mother's intended visit: perhaps they might be actuated with a desire of accompanying her, which could not possibly be done, as they were not included in Mrs. Mary's invitation; this, I am inclined to think, was really the case, as they had often been heard to express an inclination for seeing the curious old Abbey: perhaps, to venture another guess, they, with a feeling too general, I am sorry to say,

say, for the credit of "poor human nature," were a little jealous that Fanny should be noticed and themselves overlooked by their spinster cousin.

Mrs. William, of course, intimately acquainted with the dispositions of her daughters, and consequently able to judge how existing circumstances were likely to affect them, softened all asperities in a moment, by saying, in an affectionate tone of voice—"I look upon it as highly fortunate that Mrs. Mary St. Paul did not include you, Margaret, or indeed any of you, in her kind invitation, as it would have deprived me of an opportunity of observing how cleverly you can manage the family during my absence. Perhaps, if I find you can do well without me, I shall be tempted  
to

to go with your papa to Buxton, which I believe would be, of all plans, the most likely to put to flight those rheumatic symptoms which have tormented me for the last two or three winters."

The prospect of "a little brief authority" has reconciled many more experienced and important personages than the young ladies of Marton to arrangements which at first view seemed disagreeable; the idea that they were, though but *pro tempore*, to be installed mistresses of their father's house, therefore it will not, I should presume, be thought extraordinary, took away every thing like regret that they were not, at present, to be introduced at Napperton Abbey; it even did more than this, for it kindled a general alacrity to select  
and



and pack up such articles of dress as their mother must necessarily take along with her. In half an hour all preparations were complete, and Mrs. William St. Paul, along with Fanny Sharkem, stepped into Mrs. Mary's chaise, and pursued their road to the village of Napperton.

The amiable spinster was delighted with their early appearance, and still better satisfied when, in answer to her interrogation—" Shall I order the carriage to take you back to Marton this evening?" Mrs. William replied—" I am at your service, my dear madam, as long as you think proper to retain me."

Many hours elapsed not before the arrival of a man-servant from Mrs. Sharkem, with a bundle of clothes for  
Miss.

Miss Fanny and a note of permission for her continuance at the Abbey during Mr. St. Paul's absence.

No trio in the world could be more likely to harmonize than that we have now assembled at Napperton: Rodney was the centre round which they perpetually rallied; he formed alike the theme of their conversation and the subject of their thoughts; neither was the remembrance of him lost, even when they pressed the pillow of repose—nay, it was then more particularly that he reigned the conspicuous, I may say the exclusive object of regard; then it was that Mrs. Mary beheld visibly embodied that favourite on whom she durst not flatter herself her mortal orbs should ever rest: again she gazed on his intelligent eye, sparkling.

sparkling with animation at the narratives of Hatchway, or the written records of those departed worthies whose glory he panted to equal; then she relistened to his lively remarks, resaw him actively bounding across the court, and, with all the eagerness of an enthusiastic commander, manœuvring his Lilliputian fleet on the waters of the pond. Awakening from such delightful visions, with the feeble chance afforded by extreme age of seeing them realized, too strongly resembled a return to the vicissitudes of earth from the certainties of Elysium, to be unaccompanied by a sigh of regret.

Mrs. William, too, had her dreams, though not the same reluctance at being convinced they were so; contrariwise, she

she felt a genuine delight to find them only dreams, for they generally placed poor Rodney on board a vessel just foundering, or, at best, made him the inhabitant of a desert island, far remote from his native country, and without a hope of revisiting its white cliffs and verdant lawns.

Fanny's imagination, during the season of slumber, was also certain to restore the appearance of the lamented absentee; but, excepting when she had been listening late of an evening to the hoarse croaking raven of Mrs. William's foreboding apprehensions, his appearance was so smiling, the scenery around him so bright with sunshine, the sea on which his tight-rigged vessel floated so gently undulating, that she regarded  
opening

opening her eyes on the grey walls of Napperton Abbey, unenlivened by his presence, as one of the greatest misfortunes that could have befallen her.

CHAP

## CHAPTER X.

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L'aube du jour t'a vu partir,  
Yseult, n'es-tu pas fatigué ?

Journeying on from break of day,  
Feel you not fatigued, *sir knight* ?

*From the Spanish*—TRISTAN DE LEONORS.

By the very first post that could be expected to bring tidings of the travellers, Mrs. William St. Paul received the following letter from her excellent husband :—

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“ DEAREST GIRL,

“ Fortunately the time at which  
the mail departs hence not only allows  
me

me to announce our safe arrival, but likewise to enter pretty minutely into particulars which will interest you considerably.

“To proceed methodically, Mr. St. Paul felt as few inconveniences from travelling as the youngest of our party, and instead of complaining that our day’s journey, according to the prescribed route, was tedious, invariably exclaimed—‘We ought to go forward at least a stage farther.’

“Rodney, you will have no difficulty in guessing, seconded the motion manfully; of course it was carried, and by that means we got here nearly twelve hours earlier than we expected.

“Never must I forget the rapturous emotions excited in our little sailor by the first appearance of this extraordinary place: to allow him the full enjoyment  
of

of it, Mr. St. Paul consented that he should mount the barouche-box.

“The view, which is one of the noblest that imagination can conceive, by designedly deviating a little from the direct road, first opened upon us from the downs above Porchester Castle: to the right we beheld Gosport, with its battery protecting the mouth of the finest harbour in the world; on the opposite isthmus stands the large and busy town of Portsmouth; behind, stretched out in leagues immeasurable, heave the waves of Albion’s invaluable barrier, the ocean; on them ride that majestic fleet justly entitled ‘*The wooden Walls of old England*,’ well deserving of the broom once proudly exhibited by the Dutch admiral Van Tromp, as emblematic of his having swept the seas of every  
every



every other navy: we counted no less than one hundred first-rate men-of-war, among them some carrying above a hundred guns. Beyond these striking objects the Isle of Wight, distant about six miles, beautifully breaks in upon the monotony of a sea-view. Such was the sublimity of the scene, that we compelled our postilions to stop more than half an hour before we were satisfied with contemplating it.

“ We could not have come here at a time when every thing around wore an appearance more imposing; the streets were thronged with passengers in their holiday array, the guns were firing, bells ringing, colours hoisted.

“ Rodney (you will at first doubt the assertion) felt not the exhilaration which might at his time of life be the expected

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produce

produce of such festive sounds and sights; on the contrary, he stooped from his seat and called in at the carriage-window, in most dolorous tones—'Oh, papa! I am afraid the dispute with Spain is all settled; what else can be the occasion of these rejoicings? The ships, I dare say, will be all paid off—I shall not get to sea after all.'

"I hoped as earnestly as he could possibly fear that these conjectures might prove correct, but soon was convinced that, agreeable to the young gentleman's desire, in the present instance he was no true prophet: the first person bawled to Rodney and the driver that the cause of the bustle was the arrival of lord Howe to take command of the grand fleet; this was instantaneously communicated to us, and in accents very different from  
these

those to which we had but a few minutes before attended. The information was corroborated by the vociferations of almost every one who passed us in the streets, for we could distinctly hear the name of the brave and noble admiral mingled in their conversation.

“ On drawing up to the hotel, many minutes occurred before a waiter could find time to approach our carriage and inform us they had not any kind of accommodation, not even a room at liberty, in which we could take a short refreshment. At the next inn we were but very little more fortunate, for though they allowed us to alight, and handed us into a respectable-looking sitting-room, we were almost immediately told that the apartment could not be considered our exclusive property, and that

K 2

they

they had not a bed to offer us '*for love or money.*'

"It occurred to me that lodgings would be infinitely more desirable for my aged kinsman than a house of public resort at such a bustling season; therefore I immediately proceeded to the *maitre d'hotel*, and requested him to point some out to us, observing, what I thought would secure his attention to our request, that we should be provided from his larder and cellar during our stay at Portsmouth. The bait took, and in a very short time he recollected accommodations that would, to use his expression, '*suit us to a T.*'

"On application at the place he recommended, I found the terms as enormous as the most rapacious harpy at Brighton, when the prince is down, could

could think of demanding; but on terms we did not parley—comfort and quietness were the things required, and I think, from all we have yet seen, we have found them. The rooms are good, and so *en suite* that only a door separates me from ‘*my old cousin*,’ which will enable me to see all his wants, by day or night, properly attended to.

“Whilst I was settling these momentous affairs, Rodney and his preceptor Hatchway made their escape, and returned not for some hours—the former in the most exuberant spirits: he had seen the dockyards, been on board several king’s ships, and I dare say, if we had exclusively attended to his harangue, would have occupied the sole remainder of the day in enumerating the names of all the vessels at Portsmouth,

K 3

mouth, and the various engagements in which each had signalized herself.

“ Mr. St. Paul was so charmed with the enthusiasm of our animated boy, that he repeatedly embraced him, and as often drank the health of ‘ *the young admiral*.’

“ To-morrow morning (by the way, I do not think the little fellow will sleep much to-night), immediately after breakfast, we are to go on board Rodney's ship, and be introduced in form to his messmates and the captain. My good cousin determines, and you know there is no altering his resolves, to be of the party. What an undertaking for so aged a man! a man, too, who has never before quitted *terra firma* during the whole of his protracted life.

“ Between ourselves, Sharkem has no  
great

great relish for our '*voyage*,' as he calls it; he cannot, I suppose, divest himself of the recollection that a man who ventures on the water has but a single plank between him and eternity, and perhaps he does not feel quite ready to embark for that unknown, and what is still more alarming, endless country.

" I expect in the morning to hear either of his indisposition, or his influence having prevailed upon my venerable friend to remain ashore: without one of these occurrences, he can have no pretence for staying behind us.

" Rodney and the whole party beg to join in kindest wishes for you all (Fanny of course included) with, my dearest love,

" Yours, most faithfully and  
affectionately,

" WILLIAM ST. PAUL."

This letter was a seasonable relief to the anxiety which naturally pervaded the minds of Mrs. Mary and her visitors, whilst those the most dear and near to them were exposed, in a distant part of the country, to the unavoidable perils of travelling: it was soon succeeded by another communication, in which Mr. William informed them, that at the time appointed they attended Rodney to his ship, and were highly gratified with their little voyage, which was performed on one of the loveliest mornings that could possibly be conceived.—“Every thing around,” wrote he, “wore that hilarity of aspect which fails not to operate with meliorating influence on all, however distressed, and which the superstitious hesitate not to interpret as ominous of success: the sun shone in a cloudless



cloudless sky, the green waves were just rippled by the zephyr-like breath of heaven—that breath, too, was a ‘favouring gale,’ gently swelling the sail of our boat, and bearing it, without the aid of oars, towards the grand fleet: parties going to and returning from the men-of-war, many of them with bands of music on board, all with colours floating on the light breeze, gave animation to the scene; and, as if to complete the magical effect of the whole, we had not proceeded half our way when the joyous Rodney descried lord Howe’s state barge, almost innumera- bly attended, conveying him on board the ———, where we had soon after the gratification of witnessing the ceremony of hoisting a union jack. The *gaieté de cœur* produced by these concomitant circumstances,

K 5

stances enabled us to behold Rodney ascend the side of the ship, where we were to leave him, with a firmness scarcely to be expected from an inland father, and a friend whose years likened it to a farewell leave-taking.

“The survey of the ship afforded us high amusement, and, what was infinitely more important in our estimation, introduced us, in the person of the captain, to a man whose aspect and manner were sufficiently prepossessing to reconcile me in a great degree to leaving Rodney under his care and superintendence. The chaplain, too, who attends to the education of those midshipmen whose parents think proper to employ him as a tutor, had such a recommendatory countenance as made me unhesitatingly solicit his direction to  
our

our boy's studies, as far as they came within his province.

"The midshipmen are in general Rodney's seniors, but not so much so as to unfit them for his companions: one of them is sir T——s L——'s son, of our county, and the remainder young men of family and connexions highly respectable.

"I am thus minute, from a hope that your knowledge of our son's present associates may in some measure reconcile you to the profession in which he has now formally embarked.

"Sharkem, as I expected if he failed in his attempts to detain Mr. St. Paul on shore, '*was not well enough to attend us.*'

"Our return to Portsmouth, though

shone upon by the same bright heaven, and surrounded by accompaniments in themselves as lively as those of our morning's voyage, was nevertheless dull and uninteresting. *You* will find no difficulty in accounting for this; *you* will look back, as we did, and behold the cause in the person of Rodney gazing on us from his ship, and waving his handkerchief in token of adieu, as we mutually lessened on each other's view."

The remainder of the letter was occupied with the business of the day, and the probability which the increased number of commissioned ships, and the constant bustle of the shipyards, gave to an opinion that war between Great Britain and Spain was inevitable.

In

In a postscript, Mr. William added that in the course of a very few days he expected they would be retracing their steps to Yorkshire.

Enclosed in the above-mentioned epistle were two of smaller dimensions, one of them addressed to "Miss Shark-em:" both were from the pen of the young sailor, and though pathetically expressive of sorrow at parting from them, yet rapturously, enthusiastic in praise of his selected profession, and sanguinely confident he should return to them in safety, and provided with an ample store of amusement for many a long winter's evening, over the comfortable fireside of Napperton Abbey.

"That we shall sail soon, very soon, seems the general opinion," he observed  
in

in the letter to his mother, "and the sailors appear quite delighted at the idea; I am sure, for one, I am truly so, and long most heartily to hear the signal-guns which will summon '*all hands on board*.' Papa will have it that the sailors would like better to be ashore, if it were not for the Spanish dollars with which they hope to fall in. Mr. Hatchway says that the dollars are '*all very well in their way*,' but maintains it, that the glory of licking the proud don is the thing which the Jacks like best; and I am sure I believe him, for I care not a single straw for all the dollars in the world; and yet I do nothing but think of all day, and dream of all night, pouring broadsides into the Spanish ships. I am sure we shall drub them, if

if they will but give us a chance, for Hatchway also tells me that six of the dons, with all their boasting, are not equal to one true British tar; and every soul on board says just the same thing.

“ Lieutenant Hatchway is quite the delight of our mess; he messes, you see, with us, by permission of the captain, so long as Mr. St. Paul thinks fitting to remain at Portsmouth; and it is one of the most laughable things in the world to see him stump about our cabin, with his long queue, hat set aside, and cheek almost crammed with tobacco, threatening the Spaniards with deadly vengeance for their interference with the English settlement at Nootka Sound, and telling them to bid good-bye to their dollars and their bullion.

“ I hope

“ I hope we shall fall in with the rascals; for though, as I said before, I want none of their dollars, yet I *should* like to have a few of my own gaining to present to you, and Fanny, and Mrs. Mary St. Paul, as curiosities.”

As it appeared the general opinion that lord Howe would sail for Torbay in the course of a very few days, Mr. St. Paul determined on continuing at least a week at Portsmouth after the date of the last quoted-from epistle: this arrangement (perfectly agreeable to his party) answered his purpose completely, for it enabled him to be an eyewitness of little Rodney's first departure from Albion's far-famed coast, and at the same time presented the finest spectacle in the world—a grand fleet of more  
than



than forty sail of the line weighing anchor for sea.

As long as the glass assisted the decaying sight of the old squire to view the vessel which contained "*his admiral*" (as he styled our friend Rodney), he remained on the Point, and in tolerable spirits; but the veil of distance was no sooner drawn over the object of his regard, than he broke out into exclamations indicative of violent sorrow that he had been accessory to banishing one whom he loved so well, most probably for ever from his presence.

What magical cause could produce a more extraordinary effect than did this painful recollection on the prospects of old Mr. St. Paul?—The sun which smiled above him in cloudless glory,  
the

the balmy breeze of spring, the sparkling emerald-waves, the joyous combination of sounds and sights, in a moment lost all their invigorating influence—a sombre cloud, to his disordered imagination, enveloped the atmosphere he breathed, and gave to every surrounding object a funereal gloom.

Long did he linger within view of the ocean—often, whilst the big tears traced each other down his furrowed cheeks, he exclaimed—“Alas! I now perceive, when too late, my absurdity in making this poor fellow’s Christian name imperatively designate his profession. What had he to do with a profession, or I to recommend one?—My fault, like almost every other human error, has produced its proper punishment

ment—I have deprived myself of what Heaven meant to be the solace of ‘life’s last scenes’—on him, in this world, my eyes will gaze no more. Can you forgive me, cousin William, for having thus separated you from your lovely and promising child? Will your wife? will Mary? will Fanny?—Oh no! oh no! Of one thing I am quite sure—I never can forgive myself. All left for me to do now is to ‘pray without ceasing’ that he may be restored to you in health and safety, and it shall not be neglected.”

By words Mr. William could not attempt to calm the tumult of his venerable relative’s mind—a parent situated like him is no orator. By the dumb eloquence of looks, by affectionate pressures

sures of the hand, however, he endeavoured to sooth. An attempt, with the same benevolent design, was likewise made by Mr. Sharkem—the *dear, the good, the excellent* Mr. Sharkem, and in his most *honied* accents. Nor was lieutenant Hatchway silent on the occasion; he declaimed most energetically on the glorious privilege of belonging to his majesty's navy, the certainty that the approaching contest would terminate in humbling the haughty dons, and exalting the naval character of Great Britain; and ended with a strongly-worded prophecy of Rodney's destined celebrity.

All, alas! argued equally in vain—the self-accusing old man seemed determined to refuse consolation in whatever shape,

shape, dress, or manner it approached, and tottered home to his lodgings in a state of agitation which made the surrounding friendly group tremble for the effect it might produce upon his health.

That Mr. St. Paul himself had similar fears it is not unreasonable to conjecture, from the circumstance of his immediately summoning Sharkem to a private interview in his bedchamber, and employing him in drawing up his last will and testament—a fact almost immediately published in the family by the report of the master of the house and his two sons, who were called upon as subscribing witnesses. The execution of this important document, which probably the dislike alluded to in the early part of this work, of having his intended

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ed heir known to any but himself, had made him thus long defer, seemed in a considerable degree to have composed his mind, for he afterwards sat down to supper with tolerable calmness, and smoked his subsequent pipe with a complacency of demeanour scarcely to be expected when the hand of Rodney, which had for the last four years regularly folded and presented his paper-lighters, was no longer extended to assist him.

A soothing night-draught, prepared from his Yorkshire physician's recipe, and administered by the attentive Mr. William, procured the worthy old gentleman a night of uninterrupted sleep, which had such a restorative effect, that the following day shone upon him so altogether

**altogether himself, that he requested they might commence their travels home without delay.**

**CHAP-**

CHAPTER XI.  
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Soon as they mov'd beyond the city bounds,
Th' attentive friend topography expounds,
Declares the owner of each seat, relates
His pedigree progressive through its dates,
Makes various th' advancing road beguile
And vest instruction with amusement's smile.
At the still hour when sober Evening draws
Along the fading scene her veil of gauze,
The spiry tow'rs beginning to appear,
Announce the hoary domes of learning near,
DR. BROWN'S *Philemon*.

PROTRACTED preparations were unnecessary for our home-bound travellers; to the ancient city of Winchester they
} } } } } were

were therefore able to proceed that very evening.

Mr. William having the choice of their route northward, and aware of his old cousin's taste for antiquities, with a laudable desire of diverting his mind from the recent privation, contrived to introduce as many objects of that description into their journey as possible; and from the good effect produced by a survey of the ancient walls, gateways, and buildings—above all, the venerable cathedral of Winchester, the tomb of many a royal and sacred personage, he was convinced that he could not have devised an expedient more likely to insure success.

Oxford next presented

“ Her fretted pinnacles, her canes sublime,

Her tow'rs that wear the mossy vest of time;

Her massy piles of old magnificence,
At once the pride of learning and defence;
Her cloisters' pale, that, length'ning to the sight,
To contemplation step by step invite;
Her high-arch'd walks, where oft the whispers clear
Of harps unseen have swept the poet's ear *."

Among these they wandered with so much satisfaction, that three days elapsed before the ancient squire gave the word for resuming the march; even the charges for this long sojourn at the Star Inn were considered reasonable, when the treat which perambulating the university was taken into the account.

Straight lines are said to be invariably destructive of beauty; this I conclude that Mr. William St. Paul thought held good, even in travelling, for more serpentine movements were seldom observable in any journey than that he

was

• Warton's *Isis*.

was now directing: instead of pursuing the regular road to Warwick, they branched off for Gloucestershire, and paid a visit to Berkeley Castle, than which there is not a finer or better kept specimen remaining in England of the baronial residence of former times; it was just the spot to delight Mr. St. Paul, and he would have been gratified fully if he could have divested his mind of the recollection that the walls which encompassed him were stained with blood—the courts which he trod had echoed with the expiring cries of the most cruelly-murdered king, Edward the Second.

If he were thus gratified at Berkeley, what may we not suppose his feelings to have been, on approaching those stately battlements which once o'er-ca-

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noped

nopled the renowned Guy earl of Warwick, and yet form the princely residence of his noble representatives?—Here all the splendours of Gothic magnificence burst upon him at once: the grand gateway, opening through a machicolated curtain of communication between two embattled towers, in itself a study for the antiquary, threw him into ecstasies, the charm of which dissolved not until the guide announced that they had gone through every part of the castle.

With feelings similar to those of a poet, who, after wandering many “*a charmed hour*” in the regions of imagination, is obliged to descend to the common paths and every-day circumstances of life—or those of a young female, who, from reveries of majors and captains, is
roused,

roused, like sir Arthur Acheson's lady in dean Swift, with Hannah's information that some "*rusty dull rum*" of a parson has called on her to walk—with feelings, I repeat, like these, did Mr. St. Paul turn his steps from Warwick Castle, and "take his melancholy way" to the — Inn, where the modern furniture, and a large sashed window, admitting, instead of "a dim religious light," the vulgar blaze of day, could scarcely convince him he was not living in the age when the scenes which had so strongly captivated his fancy were peopled "by knights in mail, and helmet-proof."

The next place at which they paused was the busy town of Birmingham, which containing nothing "*in the old squire's way*," he was not sorry to quit,

though he had that consideration for the taste of others, not to do so without allowing sufficient time for his *compagnons de voyage* to go through the usual shew-places.

The Soho surprised them with its multiplicity of articles, from the ponderous steam-engine to the minutest toy. Clay's manufactory completely astonished, for in it they beheld the most correct and lustrous imitations of the choicest India cabinet-ware produced from the very coarsest species of brown paper.

At Derby, the silk-mills and porcelain-works came in for a full share of admiration, and naturally gave birth to the reflection that "the English gentry display as little taste as patriotism when they send abroad for articles of shew
and

and luxury, which they might obtain at home infinitely more elegant in design and execution."

In gratitude for the old gentleman's patience in not hurrying away his friends from these wonderful exhibitions of human ingenuity, Mr. William contrived him a particularly acceptable reward, by conducting him unexpectedly to Had-don Hall and Hardwick, the former belonging to the R——d family, the latter to the D—— of D——. They may both, in some respects, be considered as deserted mansions, and can neither of them, in any respect, bear a comparison with the castles of Warwick or Berkeley; yet each had some peculiar charm which recommended it strongly to the owner of Napperton Abbey: Hardwick in particular presented specimens of ancient

cient furniture extremely curious and well preserved; and, what added to their importance, in one of the apartments the high-canopied bed, stuffed chairs, and their accompaniments, had remained without the smallest change since used by the unfortunate Mary Stuart, queen of Scotland, during the early part of her confinement under the earl of Shrewsbury: this circumstance prepared them to read, with more than common interest—

“Buxton! whose fame thy baths will ever tell,

Whom I perhaps shall see no more, farewell!”

signed “*Maria Scotiæ*,” which they found preserved on an ancient square of glass in their sleeping-quarters, “the *Hall*,” at Buxton.

Such frequent and considerable deviations from the direct road delayed their
arrival

COUSIN.

A NOVEL.

Printed by J. Darling, Leadenhall-Street, London.

his amanuensis, that he wished them to continue at the Abbey until he felt himself quite re-established there after his return ; and this he delayed acknowledging for such a length of time, that a truly welcome epistle from Rodney had reached Napperton before the family-party were dispersed.

END OF VOL. I.

Printed by J. Darling, Leadenhall-Street, London.

MY OLD COUSIN.

A NOVEL.

Printed by J. Darling, Leadenhall-Street, London.

MY OLD COUSIN;

OR,

A PEEP INTO COCHIN - CHINA.

A Novel.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

BY THE AUTHOR OF
ROMANTIC FACTS, OR WHICH IS HIS WIFE? VERONICA, OR
THE MYSTERIOUS STRANGER, &c.

Τὸ μὲν γὰρ γένος ἐσμεν.

ARATUS OF CILICIA.

We are of this man's family.

Thou art not of the fashion of these times.

SHAKESPEARE.

VOL. II.

London:

Printed at the Minerva Press for

A. K. NEWMAN AND CO. LEADENHALL-STREET.

1819.

MY OLD COUSIN.

CHAPTER I.

What moment is there, in the life of man,
Fraught with such genuine bliss as that in which
We to our bosom press a much-lov'd friend,
A friend return'd, e'er our most sanguine hope
Durst image his appearance? AUTHOR'S MS.

OUR enthusiastic hero expatiated pretty copiously on the novelties which surrounded him, and declared himself thoroughly satisfied with his profession, but could not keep back a strong expression of regret, that the cruise from which he expected his first buds of lau-

rel merely turned out a tacking voyage in the Channel, succeeded by anchoring in Torbay.

He still flattered himself that the misunderstanding between Great Britain and Spain would not be hastily adjusted; and, as we all do when advocating a favourite point, ingeniously summoned every argument in behalf of it, without once adverting to innumerable floating rumours of an exactly contradictory tendency.

Nor was sweet Fanny by any means unnoticed, for to her he spoke with a tenderness, plainly declaratory of the powerful dominion she held over his youthful heart.

Highly gratified with this communication from their darling, which was not the less acceptable, because, instead of
being

being in pursuit of a Spanish fleet, it left him riding safely in Torbay, the party now broke up, and once more left Mr. St. Paul and Mrs. Mary in undisturbed possession of their solitude at the Abbey of Napperton.

The old gentleman and lady had, however, been so long habituated to the lively society of Rodney, that they did not, as had been the case with them in former days, enjoy the solemn stillness of their ancient mansion, or think it sufficiently enlivened by the occasional visits of the civil Sharkem, or the more frequent attendance of their almost daily *Gazette*, Sympson, *alias* six-and-eightpence. Mr. and Mrs. William must now also visit them at dinner three or four times a week; and if Fanny did not look in upon them every fine morning, a mes-

senger was sure to be dispatched to her papa's, in order to ascertain the cause of her neglect.

Rodney, with an attention which strongly evinced a grateful recollection of *home*, wrote very frequently, and always with the warmest encomiums on the service in which he was employed, but ever accompanied by a thousand regrets that his cruises were nothing more than simple coasting backward and forward between Torbay and Spithead.

At times he appeared quite despairing of active employment against an enemy ; then, with the fluctuation of an English thermometer, he dispatched a few hurried lines, expressive of " a confirmed opinion that war was inevitable, and that they must sail in a few days—perhaps hours."

A great

A great promotion of naval officers which took place in September 1790 strongly corroborated Rodney's sanguine expectations; the notice in the newspapers for October, that seventy sail of the line* were in commission, confirmed them as decidedly as if this formidable fleet were under sailing orders, and an enemy's ships known to be awaiting them in the Channel.

Such was the impression made at Napperton and Marton by these alarming prognostics, that we may literally say "the voice of lamentation" was heard at both, and almost as loudly as if their favourite had received a severe wound, or undergone the amputation of a limb.

Mr. St. Paul renewed his self-accusations—the anticipations of Mrs. William

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daily

* *Vide* the diurnal papers of the period in question.

daily increased in gloom—and, such is the force of example, the hitherto-blithe Fanny had no longer the meteors of her Rodney's future glory floating agreeably round her pillow.

To what sudden, what extraordinary changes we are liable, in our present state of existence! Often, when the cup of joy, crowned with its gayest wreaths, is at our lip, we tremble, and its precious ingredients are spilt upon the ground! Frequently too, when our patience seems exhausted, and our virtue sinking, “overwhelmed with grief,” some “timely succour interposes,” and we are saved from the sword, which appeared dropping on our head!

The latter is strikingly exemplified by what happened at this period to our acquaintances at Napperton Abbey; for,

as

as the murmuring party were venting their united complaints one dismal November evening in Mrs. Mary St. Paul's parlour, and making their remarks on the weathercock of an octagon tower, visible from the window, they were suddenly roused by the sound of an approaching carriage.

"What can it be?—who can it be?" were the exclamations to be expected at a place so seldom frequented by visitors.

Fanny bounded, with the agility of a young roe, to the cloistered entrance of the Abbey, in order to discover the cause of this unusual interruption; there was yet light enough (it was not more than half-past four o'clock) for her to distinguish objects pretty accurately.

The gate of the court flew open; a boy of Rodney's stature, covered with an im-

sofa wheeled to the fire, and the happy party, with wrapt attention, gazing on, or listening to the voice of him so lately deplored as lost, now so unexpectedly discovered.

To prove decidedly that the gratification of this moment was not confined to the regions of the parlour, every time the door opened, faces from the kitchen or servants'-hall were observed peeping to get a glimpse of, or probably a nod from the general favourite.

We can all, I should suppose, without difficulty call back to our remembrance the exhilaration of mind which ensued on returning to our earliest, dearest friends, after the first long-continued absence from home; and what moment of our life can we revert to when the bosom swelled with a more genuine rapture?

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duce him with a face bright with every evidence of inward satisfaction : shall I meet with equal credence when I assert that this auspicious sunshine was soon, very soon, overcast by a cloud, is the question ? And yet both assertions are alike well-founded, for a cloud of ponderous weight most certainly, in a very few minutes, dimmed the radiance of our juvenile hero's aspect : could I subpoena witnesses from the then existing occupants of Napperton Abbey, they would confirm beyond a doubt the accuracy of my statement, for the obscuration alluded to was marked by them all—marked by them too, strange as it may at first appear, without producing the slightest correspondent gloom : the fact is, they ascribed his change of countenance to a cause which they regarded
rather

rather as a subject of rejoicing than affliction ; and they soon had their surmises confirmed by Rodney's exclaiming—" We are paid off—the differences with Spain are settled ! I have no chance to assist in giving the high and mighty dons a dressing !"

Great and general as were the ostensible symptoms of rejoicing produced by the " Gazette Extraordinary" which announced to the public an amicable arrangement of affairs between the courts of St. James and Madrid, there was not, I will be bound to declare, a family happier on the occasion than that of the old squire of Napperton. The bonfires kindled by his order levied a tremendous contribution on his ancient woods, and sent up their crackling blaze till a very late hour ; and his cellars were so seriously

14. MY OLD COUSIN.

seriously drained of his famous October, that, late as it was in the season, it was considered indispensably necessary to venture on a fresh brewing, in order to keep up the general stock.

CHAP.

CHAPTER II.
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Nescius auræ  
Fallacis! miseri quibus  
Intentata nites.      *HOMER, Ode V.*

Alas! deceived by thy present calmness and serenity, oh, softly undulating waves! he dreams not of the treacherous gale! Unhappy they to whom, whilst you are untried, you shine so temptingly!      *Paraphrase.*

WEEK followed week, and yet the sun daily rose upon Rodney, and found him, in the strongest expression of the term, "a murmuring, discontented spirit;" his attention had been early directed to naval pursuits, and so indelible was the impression,

impression, that a life on shore, though surrounded by all the comforts of affluence and the smiles of genuine friendship, appeared insupportably insipid ; he fancied himself too much of a sailor and a man to derive amusement from the once-highly-estimated *fleet on the fish-pond*, and resigned the command unreluctantly to a little boy, the son of his cousin's steward, who, probably from *his* warm descriptions, was smitten with an incurable mania for going to sea.

Hatchway, still in daily attendance at the Abbey, with a religious devotion to his profession, kept alive, we need not doubt, the ardour of his young friend by every ingenious expedient ; and it was most likely principally owing to his suggestions that the junior St. Paul resisted the united entreaties of his mother,

ther, father, cousins, and even the interesting and beloved Fanny Sharkem, to apply at the Admiralty for a discharge from future services, which, in the time of peace, might probably have been procured without any serious difficulty; his invariable reply to this often-expressed desire was—"Inclination, as well as honour, binds me to my profession, and I cannot possibly relinquish it without having at least endeavoured to render myself an object of regard to my king and country."

On publications relative to the sea-service he pored indefatigably day and night, and his researches in this valued study were so ably seconded by Hatchway, that in a very few months he could describe, with the closest attention to minutiae,

mination, every important naval action which had occurred for many centuries, and could converse so scientifically on the subject as to appear, even in the estimation of experienced auditors, a professional rather than a theoretical seaman.

At length, after the lapse of nearly two years from the time when he called himself *laid up in port Napperton*, the papers of the day announced the preparation of an embassy to China, a country, however important its staple commodity has rendered it to this tea-drinking island, little known, from the peculiarly jealous character of its despotic government to the generality of Europeans.

“ Oh that I could be attached, in any way,

way, to this interesting expedition?" was the secret and daily wish of Rodney.

It was soon communicated to his tutor, the lieutenant, and almost as speedily published at Marton and the Abbey.

At first it met with a general opposition; but what will not perseverance effect, where the petitioner is a general favourite?

Rodney unceasingly pressed and entreated—Hatchway assiduously seconded the motion, and I am inclined to believe that owing to a suggestion of his it was eventually carried; the prevailing argument was no other than that Rodney might be indulged, without greater personal risk than awaited any sea-voyage, as there was sure to be no fighting.

Mr.

Mr. Sharkin's interest at the Admiralty was again resorted to, and once more successfully employed, for he very soon obtained an appointment for Rodney St. Paul on board the L——, of sixty-four guns, which was to have the honour of conveying the noble ambassador and his suite to their remote destination.

A daily-increasing diminution of sight prevented the old squire from attempting another journey to Portsmouth, and Mr. William's constant attendance on him was now so absolutely necessary, that on Hatchway alone devolved the task of witnessing Rodney's re-embarkation, which he, in the true log-book style of journal, communicated, not per telegraph, but per post, to the family at Napperton Abbey.

“ At



“ At half-past four *a. m.* anchored at the — Hotel, Portsmouth: wind veering from N. E. to N. W.—weather somewhat hazy. All hands well.

“ *Sept.* —. Turned out at eight *a. m.* —took an observation. No likelihood of sailing orders.

“ At ten went on board the L—: like Rodney's berth and messmates; all the lads seemed true-hearted British tars, able enough, and if there had been a chance for the fun, willing enough to have licked the dons—none of your fair-weather gentlemen sailors, who had rather lubber it over a fireside at home, than risk their precious hulks on old ocean.

“ 23d.—Rodney in high glee—wind changing to the right quarter.

“ At

“ At three, the wished-for signal-gun for all the officers and men on shore to repair on board.—Wish, from my soul, that one-legged Jack Hatchway could, somehow or other, have been spliced into the expedition, though no fighting in the way, and Jack not over and above fond of the tea-making gentry of Nankin.

“ 25th.—Must sail to-day. Rodney came ashore at nine, *a. m.* Returned with him to the ship—overhauled, for the last time, his stores: nothing wanting but a few more cotton shirts—time enough to get them at a slop-shop—better than buying them of a ship’s steward, who often cheats ten per cent.

“ Shipped the shirts at noon—returned with the boy on board—took leave at two—and about five, *p. m.* the *L—*,  
accom-

accompanied by the H—— Indiaman, captain M——, and the I—— brig, for a tender, sailed in good style. Could perceive Rodney at the stern, waving his flag, *alias* a silk handkerchief, to me, which my book of signals interprets as good wishes for all friends in Yorkshire, the charming Fanny in particular.

“ N. B. We toasted the pretty maid in a can of mother ——’s famous flip, at the Punchbowl, on Saturday night—that night—

‘ When all true British tars carouse,  
And drink to sweetheart, or to spouse.’

“ 26th.—Entered baggage at the custom-house of the gallant Rodney coach—no seaman sails in any other vessel, if so be he can procure a berth in her; she seems tightly rigged—doubtless crew will

will prove sufficient to man her completely, for she is to be full *at all ends, cabin and steerage.*

“ Hang it! can’t get clear of Portsmouth harbour to-night. Wind and weather good enough, but head rather muddy; yet have sense enough left to know that the lad at the helm—and by jingo! I must steer—will be sure to run foul of quicksands, and then there sort of things of old Davy Jones’s contrivance, without a head and brains on board.”

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The epistle whence these whimsical abstracts have been purloined reached Napperton Abbey, much to the satisfaction of its inhabitants, many days before the writer made his appearance there :

there: his head, I fear, continued muddy, and reason cloudy, too long to admit of his weighing anchor at the time originally fixed. He came, however, safe and well, and was sure to be welcome, since he had had the last look at Rodney, dear Rodney, and was never weary of talking of him, and prognosticating the credit he must eventually prove to the British navy.

Rodney's experience that his kind-hearted friend's passion for grog often interfered with punctuality in his appointments, suggested the necessity of forwarding letters by the post, independent of the packet forwarded by the lieutenant; and it was lucky he took this precaution, for it saved the feelings of his relatives from nearly a week of uncertainty and suspense.

In these letters he wrote with the strongest expressions of delight in every thing around him, and particularly of the anticipated gratification he looked forward to, in a country so completely new to him as China and its dependencies.

"The Chinese," observed he, "are such a jealous kind of people, that we know but little more of them than that they furnish us with an article which forms an important feature in two of our daily meals,

"Good Hatchway tells me that I must prepare for seeing real creatures as curious and as much unlike ourselves as the visionary beings I have read of with such rapture in the 'Arabian Nights Entertainments.' I wish heartily I may, for I think I should not be afraid of the  
genii,

genii, and I am quite sure I should like, of all things, to behold a lady so beautiful as the 'Princess of China,' for she would be like my dear little Fanny, and I should fancy myself in England.

"The mandarins, you know, I am already acquainted with, for Mrs. Mary St. Paul used to have them nodding away, as Hatchway would say, at the rate of I don't know how many knots an hour, on her mantlepiece. If the living ones have such strange motions, I am afraid I shall laugh in their faces, and perhaps affront the old gentlemen.

'But never mind,' my old friend the lieutenant observes, 'never mind that, Roddy; foreigners never take any thing much amiss that we John Bulls do or say—'cause *why*,' to use his very words,

‘ they know, that if they give us an angry shot, we should pour in a broadside, and sink their lubberly hulks at once.’

“ I mean to write whenever I can, and fancy I shall have many opportunities of getting my letters convoyed homeward, from the multiplicity of ships we shall doubtless speak with at sea.”



### CHAPTER III.

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For foreign ports and lands unknown,
Lo, the firm sailor leaves his own;
Obedient to the rising gale,
Unmoors his bark, and spreads his sail,
Defies the ocean and the wind,
Nor mourns the joys he left behind.

Corron.

THE first communication which Rodney had it in his power to make to his eagerly-expectant friends in England, was dated off Madeira, Friday, October the 12th, and from it I shall in-

dulge my readers with the following abstracts :—

“ I have been longing to tell you how I am going on, ever since we lost sight of Spithead ; but till this day have not had a certain opportunity of forwarding my letter.

“ Here we arrived yesterday, in forty-four feet water. The view of Madeira is most delightful. I hope, before we again put to sea, to be able to give you some account of the interior of the island.

* * * *

“ Lord M—— went ashore, at the invitation of the British consul. In compliment to him the ship's company manned

ned the yards, which is the grandest sight you can conceive; and this you will believe, when I tell you, that in such cases every yard of the ship is covered by seamen, in their best apparel, even to the main-topgallant-royal.

“ 13th.—I have now been on shore: I went in the suite of Mr. A——. The landing-place is most extraordinary—steppings are cut up a steep rock, and wind to a communication with the high road to Funchal. During our short journey thither, we met with a building which I should have guessed to have been any thing rather than a church, had not a cross pointed it out to us as such. The inside was crammed with images and pictures, I suppose highly esteemed by good Catholics, for we found many of them on their knees

before them; but I did not regard them or their 'holy house,' as I heard some one call it, half so much as the delightful view of the country, both above and below. I wish Fanny was here with her pencil, to sketch it—perhaps she would introduce her friend Rodney as a figure in the landscape.

“ Pray tell her, that although she cannot, agreeable to my wishes, be transported hither, to delineate these delightful prospects, she may yet oblige me by exerting her delightful talent in painting her own picture, and sending it to me by the first packet from England which takes out letters for China. She once drew Hatchway to the life, and, I think, my dear good old cousin and Six-and-eightpence.

“ If my genius enabled me to take
like-

likenesses, I am sure I would not ask this favour, for I could then make her portrait a correct one, as I have every feature of her sweet face, almost as much before me as if I were looking at it.

“ You never witnessed any thing half so funny as the carriages here : I remember reading of Don Quixote’s being sent home from one of his entertaining sallies in a cage, and I thought of him the moment I cast eyes on a lady, riding out for the benefit of the air, as we entered Funchal : her vehicle was covered with a net, and supported on poles, which were supported by four athletic men.

“ Conveyances of a similar description were waiting, like a stand of coaches in London.

“ We went to a celebrated convent of

ladies, who talked pretty fast to the gentlemen, through their grates, and, I thought, looked as if they would have had no objection to have followed them to the ship. They gave us a great many very beautiful toys of their own manufacture : I shall preserve my share of them for Fanny."

His next letter bore date from the island of Teneriffe, where they anchored October the twenty-first. His simple remarks upon its celebrated peak shall be all, from this communication, with which I shall trouble my perusers:—

" In compliance with my earnest desire, I was one of those fortunate
enough

“ The first ascent is rich in corn-fields and vineyards, and ever verdant with woods; which never lose their brilliant green foliage, but when they drop it off to give immediate room for new leaves.

“ Soon after this perennially summer-scene—now you must not think I am beginning thus early to make use of the traveller’s licence, for I assure you I am speaking the exact truth—we came to regions where never vegetable grew, but where ice and snow lie on every side, in immense piles, which have never

been dissolved, from the foundation of the world.

“What makes this eternally-wintery waste more extraordinary is, that we had not long passed it before we reached an immense cauldron, which vomits flames, and emits smoke continually; and I should have thought the heat necessarily proceeding from this inextinguishable fire would have melted all the snow in the world, rather than have allowed it to remain unchanged on its very bosom.

“We rode upon mules, which must be the surest-footed creatures in the world, or they never could have conveyed us safe over such dangerous roads. We used neither whip nor spur, but the unfortunate animals, in my opinion, were no gainers by this circumstance, as they
were

were urged forward by followers, armed with pointed instruments, which they applied pretty liberally to such beasts as displayed any symptoms of refractoriness or fatigue.

“ This interesting excursion occupied two days and two nights, and so cold was the region in which we were obliged to sleep, that we could not do without our great-coats and a warm fire, though sheltered from the external air by a tent.”

The letter which succeeded that from Teneriffe was begun on the eighteenth of December, and described, at full length, all the absurd and troublesome ceremonies which take place on crossing the line—of course a fruitful subject to
a boy

a boy of Rodney's years and turn of mind.

As no immediate opportunity occurred of dispatching this amusing composition, it set forward for the island of Great Britain, accompanied by another sheet, descriptive of the richness of coast and beauty of prospect presented on casting anchor in the delightful harbour of Rio Janeiro, on the first of December, where they fell in with the *Hero*, of London, a whale ship, from the South-sea fishery, bound homeward.

As Rodney continued to write perseveringly, day after day, in a journal-like form, he was always prepared with a packet for dear England, whenever a chance of sending it thither fell in his way. Such a one did not, however, happen, after clearing Rio Janeiro, until
the

the month of March, 1793, when they entered Batavia roads, in the island of Java, and the capital of all the Dutch settlements in the East Indies.

Of this large and populous city he wrote at considerable length; but I shall satisfy myself with merely exhibiting the following short quotation:—

“ It is easily seen, from the first view of this very curious city, that it is of Dutch extraction, for it bears a most striking resemblance to the towns I have read and heard of in Holland: the streets are centered by canals, and the houses glare with red paint, which would seriously offend the eye, if they were not in general seen through rows of trees, bright with the richest green.

“ I went

“ I went last night, with young Mr. S——, to the theatre, and though I understood not one word the players said, was extremely amused : luckily the pieces were both pantomimic, of which the dialogues are never very interesting, so that the sight was every thing, and *that* we enjoyed quite as well as the best Dutch scholar in the house.

“ I shall rejoice when we again weigh anchor, for the heat is intolerable, and the filth of the streets renders it quite dreadful to walk through them. Instead of so many Europeans dying from ~~this~~ shocking climate, *I* wonder that *any* live.”

Much to the gratification of his friends in England, these repeated communications

tions had always reached their intended destination in safety ; and, in many instances, so favourable had been wind and weather, that they had come to hand, even before they could be reasonably expected : ill, therefore, were the anxious families of Marton and Napperton prepared for the grievous trial of passing week after week, month after month, without receiving a single ship-letter. The last which came to them was dated May 1793, and announced the safe arrival of the embassy in Turon Bay, Cochin-China.

It had been forwarded to Europe by a Portuguese brig, and bore the stamp of Lisbon. It was written in high spirits, and concluded with the welcome intelligence that the next time he wrote would be from Mettow, or some other port

port of the Chinese empire : but, alas ! no such gratifying notification reached the East Riding of Yorkshire.

For the first few weeks after they had begun to look with eager eyes into the letter-bag from the market town, they consoled each other with the remark, that “ unfavourable weather had doubtless prevented the L—— from completing her voyage by the time expected.” Again they argued, that “ the next morning, or the next week, would relieve their suspense.”

But the morning came and went ; the next week passed without presenting a line from abroad.

The postman blew his horn at the gate, day after day, month after month, and still not an atom of information of or from Rodney.

In

In this dreadful state of suspense and anxiety lingered out the time, until the newspapers informed the public of lord M——'s safe arrival at Peking, and the probability his reception gave birth to, that the embassy would be eventually successful: this, it is true, was necessarily unaccompanied by any individual notice of Rodney; but still it was not wholly destitute of consolatory influence, for it proved the safety of the fleet in which he had sailed—he had not then suffered shipwreck; his letters had probably been entrusted to vessels which were detained by adventitious circumstances; had he been dead, or any terrible disaster befallen him, a record of his fate must surely have found its channel to Europe.

What a blessed ingredient in the heterogeneous

terogeneous potion of life is hope! by its friendly injunctions we cling to the smallest twig, and, whilst it survives, never feel ourselves completely undone. The poet Young beautifully observes—

“ Hope, like a cordial, innocent though strong,
Man’s heart at once inspirits and serenens.”

But for this dispensation of a beneficent Providence, what must have become of the St. Paul family, devoted, as they individually were, to their darling Rodney?

CHAP

CHAPTER IV.
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————— One gleam of light  
Did sweetly cheer the ev'ning of my days.  
————— He was the kindest prop  
That age did even rest on—he is gone,  
What should I live for now ?

JOANNA BAILLIE.

Some weeks after the announcement of the embassy's arrival in China; it occurred to Hatchway that a messmate of Rodney's was a native of York; he fortunately recollected the young man's name, and on imparting the circumstance

stance to Mr. St. Paul, was commissioned by him to take a journey to the last-mentioned place, in order to discover the sort of information from Asia which had reached the friends of the youth in question.

The family on whom Hatchway was requested to call in York received him most graciously ; and from their countenances announced decidedly, that if they had heard at all from their cadet in China, the account must have been favourable.

When, however, the particular cause of their visitor's intrusion was declared, he could perceive a material alteration ; and this was too soon accounted for, by their presenting to him for perusal a paragraph in their very last letter, which

which involved the fate of the object of his care in the most perplexing mystery.

“ On the seventh of June,” said the letter, “ the captain sailed in the cutter, to take soundings in the bay, accompanied by seven of the crew, and, from his particular and earnest petition, a youth of about the age of thirteen, of the name of St. Paul, a native of our county, was allowed to join them. As this party returned not to the ships at the time expected, much anxiety prevailed on board respecting their fate.

“ A boat was dispatched up the river, to look after them, and afford assistance if required ; but it returned with the distressing intelligence, that they had been surprised by the jealous natives,  
and

and carried off as prisoners to the capital city, *Hue Foo*.

“ This information was corroborated from the shore, by messengers from several mandarins of rank and consequence, who ascribed the transaction to our captain's not confining himself to the taking of soundings, but at the same time presuming to survey and make plans of the coast, proceedings which excited the strongest alarm in the minds of the ignorant inhabitants, who doubtless imagined we were come to them with hostile intentions, and probably meditated a descent upon their country.

“ As Cochin-China is tributary to the Chinese empire, and sends an annual ambassador to the parent court, we knew not how this awkward affair might be  
repre-

represented, and whether it would not eventually have a very unpleasant influence on the fate of a mission which had cost Great Britain an immense sum, and the success of which was highly important to her interests.

“ My lord M——, through the medium of Mr. N——g, a Chinese interpreter, endeavoured to explain every thing in the most satisfactory manner, and at length, with infinite difficulty, procured the liberation of the prisoners ; but the captain and his seven men returned without poor St. Paul, of whom they can give no other account, than that, whilst they were professionally employed in the bay, he went on shore, and at the time they were seized, was not in sight ; nor could they, by dint of the most minute inquiries, learn what had

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become

become of him: even the highest authority was exerted to ascertain his fate, and yet without success."

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When we consider the nature of the information which lieutenant Hatchway gleaned by his journey to the ancient metropolis of Yorkshire respecting our friend Rodney, we cannot for a moment suppose that he returned to Napperton Abbey with a very smiling countenance; he looked indeed most woe-begone—perhaps more so than even a person of finer feelings might have done, which at first view may appear somewhat paradoxical; but, be it remembered, that our in many respects worthy lieutenant had an invincible propensity for *grog*—and *grog*, dear reader, will, in some cases,

*casca*, induce the most masculine spirit existing with the softness of that tender sex who Chaucer says are born "to spin and weep."

As evidence to this extraordinary fact, I do hereby seriously and solemnly declare, that I (Mr. Author) have, in more instances than one, beheld men whose rugged exterior promised nothing less than the briny floods of sensibility; yet, whilst under grog's imperial dominion, blubber forth their griefs as violently as a beaten schoolboy.

Hatchway was, I am sorry to record, on his arrival at the Abbey gates, brimful of his darling beverage, consequently just in cue for a display of violent sorrow. We must not, however, ascribe his tears wholly to the influence of his *familiar spirit*—they would have flown,

though not so strongly resembling an impetuous torrent, if he had tasted nothing stronger during the preceding four-and-twenty hours than the simple element—they would, I again say, have flown, for he had a heart, and that heart felt acutely, that the being he most loved on earth was in all human probability lost to him for ever! an idea embittered with the terrible reflection that to his suggestions, in a great degree, might be attributed the misfortunes of the youth whom he lamented.

“Poor fellow! poor Rodney!” were all the words he could articulate, in answer to the eager looks and interrogations which assailed him from every quarter, on entering Mrs. Mary St. Paul’s parlour.

“Have we then lost him?”—“Is he to return



return to us no more?" or expressions of similar import, burst spontaneously from every mouth.

The gushing tears and loud sobs of Hatchway interfered for many minutes with further explanation; and when he at length attempted it, his ideas were in such confusion that it was quite impossible for him to make out any thing like a plain case. In fact, all he could say amounted to little more than repetitions of his original exclamations.

"We shall make nothing of him to-night," said Mr. William, in a low voice; "so we might as well postpone inquiring into our unfortunate boy's fate until to-morrow; he will then be able to relate minutely every thing that he has heard."

"But, my dearest love," cried Mrs.

D 3

William,

William, who clung for support to her husband, "endeavour, for Heaven's sake! to elicit from him if our poor boy be living: the bare knowledge of his existence, however circumstanced, will enable us to survive the tedious interval of suspense which must elapse before we are possessed of particulars."

Mr. William reciprocated the feelings of his beloved wife; but he dreaded the answer which might follow the direct interrogation, whether Rodney were still to be numbered with the living?

"Yet," argued he, within his own bosom, "it will be better to know the worst as speedily as possible, for what certainty can lacerate our bosoms more dreadfully than the varied tortures of conjecture to which we are now condemned?"

"Dear

"Dear Hatchway," cried he, taking the hand of the poor lieutenant, "we cannot bear to see you thus agitated. Allow me, my excellent fellow, to go with you to your chamber; rest is absolutely necessary for you, after your fatigue of body and mind. At present we will not trouble you with any other inquiry than if, from what you have already said, we are to conclude our darling Rodney is no more?"

Hatchway was momentarily endued with the faculty of utterance.—"No, no!" answered he; "God above forbid! but——" and his memory seemed to fail, "but—but——I can't tell—I don't know——they did not plainly say;" and again he relapsed into a boisterous paroxysm of grief.

Mr. William took his arm, and a bed-

D 4

candle;

candle; but with the not uncommon obstinacy of inebriety, he would not move an inch from the place.

“ I know,” stammered he, with no very distinct pronunciation, “ that I am a good deal cut—but I can’t help it, upon my soul, I can’t help it!—I drank, I can assure you, to drown care for poor Rodney—Rodney, the best, ay, the very best lad that ever sailed!” Once more he wept and sobbed most audibly.

Intoxication, like insanity, cannot be managed without recourse to stratagem; Mr. William’s parental anxiety did not deprive him of this recollection, nor take away the power of usefully employing the necessary art.

“ My good friend,” resumed he, in a conciliating tone, “ don’t you perceive  
how

how dreadfully this violent expression of your grief affects our worthy relations, Mr. St. Paul and Mrs. Mary?"

"God bless them both—and you all!" cried Hatchway; "I would not hurt a hair of any of your heads, for all the wealth old ocean holds in her lockers below. Yes, yes, I'll turn into my berth, and snivel alone."

Having finished this sentence, he caught the offered arm of his friend, and staggered off, repeating all the way he went—"Poor Rodney! poor Rodney! drunk or sober, nobody shall ever catch Jack Hatchway saying that old George had ever a better lad than thee sailed in his navy. We shall never clap eyes on the like of thee, this side the day when all hands shall be mustered by sound of the last trumpet."

Those at all familiar with the manners of persons in poor lieutenant Hatchway's condition, will believe me when I assert that more than an hour elapsed, after Mr. William had attended him to his chamber, before he could disengage himself from the pressure of his hand, and make his escape to the afflicted family party below stairs.

In other circumstances, the incoherences to which he had been witness might not altogether have been unproductive of amusement; for, however strongly we may reprobate a vice temporarily destructive of that reason which distinguishes man from the brute creation, yet the most serious cannot always avoid laughing at its absurdities. In the instance of Mr. William St. Paul, amusement from surrounding objects

was

was completely out of the question; for though his eye unavoidably encountered the things which fell in its way, his ear admitted intelligible sounds, and by words he had the power of attempting to persuade the lieutenant to quiescence; in reality, "one object only swam before his sight."

Ask yon recently-bereaved mother, who is bending over the untimely urn of her favourite, perhaps her only child, if I am delineating unnaturally?—she will tell you that though at times she is apparently occupied by the avocations of life, her soul and mind are exclusively filled with one dear image, which, to use expressions similar to those Shakespeare puts into the mouth of the unhappy Constance, "walks up and down with her, speaks to her, looks upon  
D 6 her,"

her," and, in one word, whether sleeping or waking, seems her inseparable companion.

In all situations, where the imagination of man is left floating on the rough sea of conjecture, nothing resembling sound repose can be expected; poor Rodney's assembled friends at Napper-ton Abbey could not then hope for the soothing influence of sleep on the night when they had been listening to the alarming, though certainly inconclusive, because "half-told tale" of the lieutenant.

Unfortunately, his morning representations were not at all more encouraging than their incomplete predecessors—nay, they even shed a darker gloom, for they added his almost positive opinion that nothing short of Rodney's having met  
with



with some fatal accident could account for his not returning to the captain's cutter.

**CHAP.**

CHAPTER V.  
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The woman is a worldling, all complete—
Can smile on this hand, give a frown on that ;
And then she has the all-prevailing art
To flatter in so siren-like a tone.

J. L. H.

IN a very short time the distressing anxiety which involved every member of the St. Paul family became pretty generally known throughout their neighbourhood, and was quite as generally commiserated, for the object of their solicitude was an universal favourite.

Mr.

Mr. Sharkem, as might be expected, was neither last nor least frequent in presenting himself and his "soft flowing" periods of condolence to the residents at Napperton Abbey ; nor was he by any means least welcome to the ancient squire.

Perhaps, and I am inclined to credit the conjecture, he was even more eagerly listened to than Sympson, Hatchway, or even the parents of the lost boy themselves ; for whilst they, with the too general despondency of real distress, touched the subject of their affliction with that sombre pencil which affords not to the drawing the relief of hope, Sharkem, as a dexterous pleader, contrived the peroration of his address should keep alive a notion that Rodney still survived, and, by some of those extraordinary

nary

nary turns of fortune which often distinguish the lives of Asiatic adventurers, would eventually be restored to his English friends.

Other reasons, and those pretty cogent ones, may likewise be advanced, for the estimation in which our acquaintance the solicitor was held by old Mr. St. Paul. Be it remembered, he was the father of Fanny, who, as the best beloved of Rodney, had succeeded, *nem. con.* to his place at the Abbey, and was become almost, if not to the full, as great a favourite as the little sailor had ever been. Then again he had connexions in town, through whom intelligence might probably be obtained of Rodney, the expectation of which rendered his visits at Napperton always acceptable; for, whenever his approach was observed, the

the squire sanguinely flattered himself he would prove the bearer of good news.

A journey to London, which Sharkem had occasion to take about this time (the entire expences of which *several* of his clients individually defrayed, for he had the prudent money-making habit of killing many birds with one stone), was, by the favouring gale of side winds, wafted into Mr. St. Paul's ears, as entirely undertaken on his account, and of course regarded as proof positive of most disinterested attachment.

Unfortunately his researches threw not the faintest glimmering of light on the fate of little Rodney; every communication, indeed, in which he had been noticed, seemed to settle it decidedly that he had come to an untimely end.

Sharkem,

Sharkem, however, who kept in mind what our celebrated bard says on the subject of unwelcome intelligence—

“ The first bringer of unwelcome news
Hath but a losing office ; and his tongue
Sounds ever after as a sullen bell,
Remember'd tolling a departed friend,”

contrived to finish his representations to the squire with something to the following effect :—

“ But, my dear, worthy, excellent sir, there is no such thing as knowing, fixing, limiting, bounding, or circumscribing the ways, purposes, designs, and ends of a Providence, or superintending Power, that is ever working, acting, or doing for our good, interest, and advantage.

vantage. Rodney, I feel assured, lives ; and you, the best, and kindest, and tenderest of friends and relatives, will yet be benefited, blessed, and gratified by receiving within the boundaries, precincts, and liberties of your ancient and accustomed dwelling-place, called, known, or described by the name or appellation of Napperton Abbey, the object, I may add the deserving object, of your present care, anxiety, and solicitude."

For whatever purposes these encouraging addresses were meant, and however they might afford a temporary relief, yet in time they ceased, like other stimulants, to produce the desired effect. "Hope deferred," says an inspired writer,

ter, "maketh the heart sick." This was exemplified in one respect in the case of old Mr. St. Paul, for he became completely "*sick*," or, in other words, despairing of reviving information from Asia; but he was not in the same proportion sick of his soothing friend Sharkem's company—that neighbour was armed at all points against exciting such a malady. *Imprimis*, he was indefatigable, late and early, in every kind of attention; then he had an able coadjutrix in the person of his interesting daughter Fanny, who possessed that fascinating tenderness peculiarly acceptable to aged persons, and a promptitude to serve, which seemed to anticipate their wants and wishes before they had time to express them.

To

To aid in her spouse's grand design, for a design he certainly had, not a little inimical to the interest of the family at Marton, Mrs. Sharkem, "the worthy partner of his greatness," was now occasionally summoned to the Abbey; in any other case but hers, admission would not have been very easy there to a stranger.—Now don't seem incredulous of this declaration, reader, for I assure you, though the wife of their friend and solicitor, Mrs. Sharkem, was, until this period, known little more than by name to old Mr. St. Paul and his sister, and may therefore be, with due attention to correctness, denominated a stranger, and might have still continued so, had she not been "so tenderly, delicately, exquisitely organized,"
that

that Sharkem began to fear an entire separation from the darling Fanny might eventually prove injurious to her health and spirits.

To shut up these affectionate apprehensions in his own bosom would never have averted the dreaded evil; he must publish them, or perhaps endanger the life of his precious wife; and to whom could he vent his apprehensions so properly as to Mrs. Mary St. Paul, who, though a spinster, had the highest possible respect for maternal feelings?

The consequence was all that Sharkem desired—more, certainly, than he could reasonably expect from a first attack: his lady was invited to Napper-ton Abbey, received with marked kindness, and begged to repeat her visit whenever

whenever she felt inclined to see her daughter.

“ My dear, worthy madam,” was the solicitor’s reply to Mrs. Mary, when this important invitation was given, “ you are truly, and indeed too good, too attentive to me and mine. But we must not, must not permit, and allow, and suffer you to inconvenience, incommode, and fatigue yourself by receiving mistress Sharkem: no, no—however desirable and advantageous it would be to her, it must not be; however much and eagerly she longs for, and covets an opportunity of thanking you for your boundless goodness to our child, *it must not be!* I know your objection, nay, dislike to the reception of strangers; mistress Sharkem must not, therefore, be intruded upon you; suffice

suffice it, that our Fanny rides a little more frequently to her mother's abode, residence, or habitation."

Mrs. Mary St. Paul reiterated her invitation.

Mr. Sharkem swelled his catalogue of objections to its acceptance; but he was *obliged* eventually to yield to the ancient gentlewoman's mandates; and, as I have before observed, Mrs. Sharkem was ushered, in due form, into the frequently-mentioned parlour, or *sanctum sanctorum*, if you please, of the amiable spinster of the Abbey.

On introducing a new character or acquaintance, it is not generally considered enough to say, "this is Mr. or Mrs. such a one;" we are mostly required to enter into the minutiae of birth, parentage, qualifications, and *peculiar* circumstances,

stances, if we hope to insure any thing like a favourable *entrée*. Mrs. Sharkem is *quite new to you*, my dear reader—*er*: go, you will expect, and you shall not, I promise, be disappointed, that I prologue her into your *présence*.

Be it known then, to all whom it may concern, that Mrs. Frances Sharkem was the daughter of a tradesman in town, who, like too many of his thoughtless brethren, fell into the fatal error of making his expenditure far exceed his profits; insolvency, in such cases, generally follows. He felt not, however, its galling effects, for, at the moment when his name was about to be gazetted in the bankrupt-list, his life was cut short by an apoplectic fit.

His wife had been dead some years ;

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poor

poor Frances and two sisters consequently became orphans, without a farthing, or any other prospect than a parish maintenance and education, unless it could be elicited from a distant relative in Yorkshire, who was a flourishing tradesman and a bachelor; he was applied to: the children, in the meanwhile, were deposited in the common receptacle for paupers, the workhouse.

The answer from the old kinsman was favourable; and, in obedience to it, the young folks were forwarded "*per waggon*," to the north, and met with a far more cordial reception than might have been expected to await any *parcel of goods* which could not be turned to *immediately* profitable account.

The shopkeeper had two widowed
sisters,

sisters, of small independent property, who resided near him ; with them he held a privy council on the subject of his recent importation, and it was then and there agreed, that *as the children were received*, they *must* be decently supported ; each of the charitable matrons took the charge of one of them.

Frances, most fortunately for herself— I may say fortunately in the strongest sense of the expression, for never slavery was more severe than the situation of her sisters, whose patronesses studied the “ *art of tormenting* ” so successfully, that they drove their respective *protégées* to accept the first offers that were made them of matrimonial protection, and then were loud in exclaiming against their imprudent connexions, and forward behaviour.

"Only think," was their mutual complaint, "how ungrateful these hussies have been to us, after taking them from a workhouse, and bringing them up like ladies, to leave us thus, in the decline of life, and at the very moment when the debt they owe might have been so properly cancelled!"

Frances's guardian, though not such an adept in afflicting as his sisters, certainly had his ways of throwing thorns into her path; and, but for her very accommodating temper, they would have festered in their lodgment: her generally-successful method of resisting them (which I record for the benefit of dependents of every sort, from the domestic chaplain, not allowed to take wine with his patron's daughters, to the humble governess, who must stand whilst
her

her mistress is *giving audience*) was, by declaring in words, or by the most conciliating actions, that she was ready to do any thing, and every thing that could be required of her; and this self-denying system she extended even to the conquering her *first love*, a task not generally considered easy, particularly where the object of it has "wisdom and worth," and every other recommendation, excepting (alas, sad deficit!) weight of metal: and for all this self-command she had *her reward*, if *money* could present it to her, for Sharkem (who had the disposal, on good landed security, of her relation's thousands, and consequently knew "to *within one penny* of what *he was worth*") offered, and, by *mandamus* from the higher powers, was accepted.

The education of Mrs. Sharkem had been so far attended to, that she was early sent, as day-scholar, to the principal female seminary of the place, though she certainly studied there to some disadvantage, for, to tell the truth, she was rather looked down upon, as tradesmen's young ladies will be invariably, by little squires' daughters, and such sort of gentry, though at the same time their papas' Christmas accounts with the parents of the children they are *taught* to despise are not very regularly liquidated.

The governess too, in compliment, no doubt, to the prejudices of her lady-pupils and their mammas, did not exert *all* her energies in forwarding the accomplishment of so insignificant a personage as the woollendraper's niece.

But

But Fanny was not a girl to be kept in the background : the same passive obedience which smoothed her way to the good graces of her old relation, enabled her, in time, to convert into friends those who had been originally most prominent in insulting her ; and this so far influenced the mistress of the establishment in her favour, that if she quitted not the school, in the strongest sense of the term, *finished*, she had certainly acquired a smattering of all things, and was clever enough to make as great a show off with her " little learning," as many who had drank much longer and " deeper of the stream."

As Mrs. Sharkem, she was called upon and noticed to the utmost extent of her wealthy cousin's wishes : and the elevation to which she was now raised, it

was generally believed, confirmed her *sole heiress* to the old man's hoards, though her sisters, equally near to him, were almost in absolute want.

But such is the way of the world: the miser, who by meanness and the extremest parsimony has acquired a fortune, almost invariably selects the least indigent members of his family for his heirs and legatees.

Trained in necessity's trammels to the arts of servility, they were perfectly understood by Mrs. Sharkem, and invariably practised whenever there appeared the remotest chance "for effect."

On the venerable spinster of Napper-ton Abbey they were played off pretty liberally, and with complete success; and this will not be wondered at, when we consider how dulcet are the notes of flattery,

flattery, and that when they appear, as they would do unquestionably in the present instance, as the ebullitions of gratitude, gratitude for favours lavished on a beloved child, they must be irresistibly fascinating.

The increasing influence of the Sharks at the Abbey was, as may be naturally concluded, looked upon by Mr. William St. Paul with something of a jealous eye; he well knew the insinuating ways of the man of law, and trembled lest the inheritance of Napper-ton, to which he had a very fair claim, as next of kin, should be diverted from its natural channel by his manœuvres.

The reports of old Sympson greatly strengthened these pardonable apprehensions, for he announced the making of a new will by the old squire; and

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from

from the gleeful countenance of Sharkem on the occasion, he augured that it must be favourable to his interests.

Remonstrance, on the part of Mr. William, even if he had decidedly ascertained a just foundation for his fears, would have been a dangerous and improper experiment, for his old cousin had unquestionably a disposing power over his possessions; all he could do, therefore, was to continue his visits and attentions at the Abbey, and manifest every possible design of obliging.

Nor had he or Mrs. William any reason to complain of a cool reception, or any falling off from former kindness, on the side of the squire or his sister; if any sort of change could be observed, it was even favourable to the hopes of eventually inheriting, for if they made
not

not their appearance at least every other day, their absence was complained of as a grievous disappointment.

Fanny Sharkem, it is true, was retained entirely at the Abbey, and noticed there with all the distinction of a favourite child.

“But then,” argued Mr. William, “is not this in compliment to our poor Rodney, who so tenderly loved the dear girl? and can we expect less than that she should be remembered with some considerable bequest, under my old cousin’s will?” This, my dear, is cause sufficient for Sharkem’s gleeful countenance—the estate will, in the end, vest in me; or my children, depend upon it; and I am sure I shall not, by any means, reluctantly discharge whatever Fanny may have left to her. I love her, and I

am sure you love her too, quite as a daughter."

If silence could be interpreted as consent to her husband's suggestions, we may conclude Mrs. William believed them well-founded, for she opposed them not by a single word; but, for all this, she was not by any means well at ease within herself, or at all confident that Sharkem had not more extensive views on Mr. St. Paul's property than a mere legacy for his daughter Fanny; and of this she became daily more and more suspicious, from observing that overstrained obsequiousness of manner on the side of the senior Sharkems towards her and her family, which the artful generally practise on those whom they intend to injure. That the elegant Sotheby thought somewhat similarly with Mrs.

Mrs. William St. Paul, is plain from the following expressions in his Zamorin, &c.

“ ————— The injurer
Can smile on whom he wrong’d, and calmly tender
His hand in pledge of friendship.”

CHAP.

CHAPTER VI..
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Along the gentle slope of life's decline  
She bent her gradual way, till, full of years,  
She dropp'd like mellow fruit into the grave.

Dr. PORTEUS..

BUT what, alas! availed it that Mrs. William St. Paul thus accurately penetrated the designs of her enemies, when, from an apprehension of offending the old squire, she durst not venture on representing to him what she considered their real characters; she was therefore doomed to be a dumb witness of their insidious efforts, and could only combat

bat them by an undeviating attention to the increasing wants of her venerable friends.

There is perhaps no sensation more genuinely satisfactory to a well-organized mind, than that which we experience whilst administering to the manifold necessities of age and infirmity ; for if even the amiable undertaking be alone answered by the voice of peevishness, we feel ourselves performing the duty enjoined by a Providence which appoints the strong as guardians to the weak, and we go not without that sweetest of rewards, an applauding conscience.

It was this encouraging self-approbation which enabled Mrs. William to get through the long course of nursing that now fell to her lot, without  
lifting

lifting up the voice of murmur, or breathing a single ejaculation of complaint.

It is true, her cares were considerably lightened by the active part which the gentle Fanny ever unrepiningly sustained in her "*labours of love*;" and besides this, the naturally placid disposition of her charges rendered attendance on them infinitely less irksome than might have been expected; but still there was enough to try human patience to the uttermost, which will be credited by all who honour these pages with perusal, when I inform them that for three whole years Mrs. William continued her unremitting services at Napperton Abbey, and that her only change of scene was from the bedside of Mrs. Mary to the parlour of her brother, who,

who, nearly blind and deaf, was quite incapable of assisting himself, and totally dependent for amusement on the conversation of his visitants.

At length it was the will of the Almighty Lord of lords to terminate the mortal race of Mrs. Mary St. Paul, who departed, we may say full of years, for she had numbered no fewer than ninety anniversaries of her birth.

Her funeral was conducted in strictest conformity with the customs of old times—customs which had never yet been neglected at the interment of any of her family.

As such solemnities are now very differently managed to what they were in the instance of mortality before us, I shall venture on concisely detailing some particulars, which may serve as a record  
of

of the period when publicity seemed studied, instead of privacy, and even the tender sex had philosophy enough to follow the relicts of a friend to their last abode, and shed the tender tribute of affection in *propria persona* (not by proxy) at the side of an open grave.

Every individual resident in the village of Napperton received an invitation to dine at the Abbey on the day of the funeral.

Precisely at noon the oaken tables of the great hall groaned beneath the weight of old English hospitality.

Mr. and Mrs. William presided, and even old Mr. St. Paul, notwithstanding his infirmities, was placed in his usual canopied wooden chair:

The board of this capacious apartment was sufficiently extensive for the comfortable

comfortable accommodation of the tenantry, principal farmers, and relations.

In the servants' hall and large kitchen were entertained the lower orders, classed at the respective tables with as correct an attention to their several situations in life as can be observed at the strictest court in Christendom.

A bell, which had hung for centuries in one of the angular turrets of the Abbey, announced the conclusion of the substantial repast, and was almost immediately succeeded by a tolling from the steeple of the parish church, which gave notice that preparations for the burial were to commence.

Three venerable matrons, in the deepest weeds, but closely hooded with white silk, now entered the great hall,  
the

the first of whom bore a basket, lined and covered with napkins of snowy whiteness, and containing hoods, hatbands, and gloves, sufficient for the supply of the whole company.

One of her followers held a massy silver salver, with spiced wine, and funeral biscuit; and the other presented to each visitor a sprig of yew or rosemary, with its end neatly enfolded in black-edged writing-paper.

These ceremonies were gone through amidst the profoundest silence; and when each person was served, the taciturn old ladies proceeded to the company assembled in the inferior apartments with loads nearly similar to those they had recently distributed in the great hall.

This done, the directress of the solemnity,



This last tribute of respect being paid, the coffin-lid was closed, and its really and justly-lamented inmate for ever excluded from the light of the sun.

In a short time the melancholy procession to the church began, the corpse borne on *towels*\* of fine white linen, by unmarried women, preceded by the whole choir of village minstrels, chaunting

\* The appellation given in many parts of the North of Yorkshire to long pieces of fine linen, exclusively employed in carrying the dead to their graves.

chaunting Sternhold and Hopkins's version of the ninetieth psalm.

At the head of the coffin was carried, by two young girls, a garland of white paper, delicately cut in imitation of flowers, in the centre of which was suspended a pair of gloves, inscribed with the name and age of the departed, and stating that she died a virgin\*.

Then followed Mr. St. Paul, supported by his friends, Sympson and Hatchway; and after them, in pairs, Mr. and Mrs. William, and their children (the only relatives, excepting the old squire). The remainder of the numerous attendants,

\* Though Mr. Brand says that this ancient custom is entirely laid aside in the North, yet the author has seen many specimens of these virgin crowns, in the remote villages of the Yorkshire Wold, particularly at a place called Bishop Wilton.

dants, with the exception of Fanny, who walked with the kinsfolks, followed without much attention to order.

At the conclusion of the church ritual, the company cast their sprigs\* of evergreen into the grave; the young women deposited their paper coronal over the vacant seat† of the deceased; and, after listening to a funeral sermon, from the tenth chapter of the book of Proverbs—

“The memory of the just is blessed,”

the procession returned to the Abbey,  
in

\* Upon her grave the rosemary they threw,  
The daisy, butter-flower, and endive blue.

GAY.

† To her chaste mem'ry flow'ry garlands strung,  
On her new empty seat aloft were hung.

GAY.

in the same order it had quitted its gates.

When the principal guests had entered the old mansion, a *dole*\* was distributed in bread and money to the necessitous poor, who immediately departed to their respective homes.

The only ceremony which now remained for those who re-entered the hall was that of listening to the old lady's will, which was read in an audible voice by Mr. Sharkem; and, after a legacy of five hundred pounds to "Frances Sharkem, junior," and some remem-  
brances

\* A distribution to the poor, formerly common at the funerals of rich persons. Chrysostom supposes it was meant to procure rest to the soul of the deceased; and that he might find his judge propitious.—"Charity shall cover the multitude of sins."

brances to old servants, it bequeathed the rest, residue, and remainder of the testatrix's property to her " dear and well-beloved cousin, Margaret, the wife of William St. Paul, esquire, of Marton Hall, in the East Riding of the county of York."

What was infinitely more acceptable to Mrs. William than the knowledge of this disposition of her excellent kinswoman's effects, which secured about four thousand pounds to her family, was the ejaculation which escaped from old Mr. St. Paul, on hearing his sisters last testament recited.

" Just as she ought to have done!" sighed the venerable squire, at the same time affectionately pressing the hand of his cousin's wife; " no one can be so deserving of the little my poor Mary had

to bequeath, as yourself. As to our own Fanny's legacy, it is only given in compliment to the memory of the dear lost Rodney."

From this speech, and the subsequent kindness of their old cousin, Mrs. William's suspicions that the scheming solicitor was likely to succeed to the inheritance of Napperton considerably subsided, and she once more began to flatter herself that the estates of her husband's ancient family, whenever they changed their owner, would descend in their natural channel.

In this agreeable state of anticipation we shall, for the present, leave our amiable acquaintance, Mrs. William St. Paul, and take a rapid flight into that quarter of the globe where we last beheld our juvenile hero, Rodney, respecting  
ing

ing whose fate, we doubt not, every reader must feel deeply interested.

CHAPTER VII.  
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So by some sage enchanter's spell
(As old Arabian fables tell),
Amid the solitary wild,
Luxuriant gardens gaily smiled;
From sapphire rocks the fountain streamed;
With golden fruit the branches beamed;
Fair forms in ev'ry wond'rous wood,
Or lightly tripp'd, or solemn stood.

WARTON.

RODNEY, to whom every thing was new and charming on the Asiatic coasts, was highly gratified when he gained permission to accompany captain — to make observations in the beautiful bay of Turon.

The

The country, as may be naturally supposed, was much more interesting to a boy of his activity and age, than the tedious and mechanical process of taking soundings, and making nautical remarks; he therefore petitioned very strenuously for the privilege of stepping ashore, in which, after much importunity, he was indulged, on condition that he should not stray farther than a call from the cutter would be certain to reach him.

Novelties of course were not wanting to attract his attention, for they occurred in every herb, or tree, which waved its leaves or branches in the wind, and every bird which fluttered past; but what attracted his notice more than any other object, animate or inanimate, was a lightly-built pleasure-barge, fitted up

F 3

with

with figured silk awnings, and flags of almost every shape and colour, in the true Chinese gondola style, which was moored close to the shore : the opportunity its deserted state afforded for close inspection was not to be neglected ; poor Rodney stepped unhesitatingly on board, and so deeply was he engaged in the survey, that he had been in the vessel a full quarter of an hour before he perceived that the slender cable which had attached it to the land, had, from some accidental cause, lost its hold, and he was floating, by the united force of a rising tide and strong current, very rapidly down the river Campvella.

Vain were his most strenuous efforts to check the progress of his gaily-trimmed bark ; oar he could not find, and a rudder hung not in the accustomed situation

ation (it was probably on account of some repair for it that the vessel had been left without hands on board).

With all the firmness of our young friend Rodney's character, his present was a predicament which could not fail exciting a considerable degree of alarm; and this more particularly when he perceived himself approaching a fall of the expansive river over a line of rocks, which completely crossed its course—this was, even from a considerable distance, unequivocally announced by the rushing "sound of many waters."

Such was the rapidity of his progress, that human art could not succour him; for even had the banks been crowded with spectators, they could only have witnessed his descent of the tremendous cataract.

“Farewell, my own sweet Fanny! my dear father! my good mother! my worthy cousins! how you will weep and lament for your poor lost Rodney!” were his ejaculations, when he perceived himself on the brink of destruction—when he felt himself actually precipitated down the dread abyss; and they were the *last words* he uttered—until, waking from a sort of trance, he found himself in what at first he fancied a new world, and surrounded by an unknown race of beings.

By degrees his ideas became collected, and he beheld objects distinctly.

The scenery was such as he had seen delineated on the highly-estimated Indian skreens, and antique specimens of oriental China, at Napperton Abbey.

On every side arose rocks of truly
grotesque

grotesque appearance, for the most part surmounted by temples and pagodas, in a variety of forms, and connected by bridges of exquisitely light, but somewhat fantastic structure. Boats of peculiar elegance, brilliant with streamers, flags, and garlands, of almost every hue, floated on the pale green bosom of an undulating lake.

The hands from which he was sensible of receiving the most humane and affectionate attention were the fairest on which his eyes had ever rested; and the attire and features of their owners again brought vividly to his remembrance the ladies depicted on Mrs. Mary St. Paul's jars, in the favourite closet.

The anxious countenance and indefatigable efforts of the director of operations,

tions, struck him with particular force, and excited feelings of esteem and gratitude not to be defaced.

The inspirer was a man considerably past the meridian of life, clad in a flowing garment of white* silk, with a vest and trousers of the same materials, a girdle of gold, and a curiously-curved beard, of patriarchal length.

Two attendants, in highly-picturesque dresses, strongly resembling Highland plaid, one bearing a long and curious porcelain pipe, and the other a bag of the richest embroidery, stood behind him, like state appendages, whilst many other attendants, somewhat similarly costumed,

* Black is the colour generally worn by persons of distinction, in Cochin-China : white is used there, as in China, for mourning.

costumed, seemed awaiting their commander's nod.

The countenance of the principal personage brightened in proportion with the manifestations of returning reason presented by the aspect of our friend Rodney; and when at length he possessed the power of sitting upright, on a silken mattress beneath him, and looking round with a collected air, the exclamation, "Che-vau-tau!" seemed to burst spontaneously from every lip.

The elderly gentleman retreated suddenly from the surrounding group, and prostrated himself before a gigantic and hideous-looking image, which sat near them, under a richly-ornamented canopy, and appeared as if returning thanks for some signal and extraordinary deliverance, or unexpected favour.

Ineffectually did poor Rodney endeavour to express in sounds the cause of his present appearance ; not a syllable he said was understood, and the only answer he received was a constant repetition of “ Che-vau-tau ! Che-vau-tau ! ” with additional expressions, equally unintelligible.

He was soon arrayed in habiliments similar to those worn by the superior part of the assemblage around him. The effect which his appearance in this new dress produced was most extraordinary : the old gentleman and the ladies seemed equally ready to adore him, and mutually expressed their approbation by rapturous vociferations of the favourite words, “ Che-vau-tau ! ” accompanying them by a shower of almost overwhelming embraces and caresses.

Boiled

Boiled rice, blanched to the whiteness of snow, dried fruits, and confectionary, were presented, accompanied by small China bowls, which he found, on raising to his lips, contained a strong decoction of the most delicately-flavoured tea.

He was soon able to rise, and stand in an erect attitude. The first use he made of this recovered power was to describe, distinctly as gesticulation could do it (by pointing to the precipitous waterfall), the quarter whence he came; then, in a supplicating attitude, he laid his hand upon his breast, and immediately after directed it towards the country above the cataract, meaning the action to convey an earnest desire to be reconducted thither: but it appears he
was

was misunderstood, for the yacht in which he was speedily afterwards embarked, with the principal part of the company, sailed to an immediately contrary quarter from that towards which he wished to voyage.

At another time, and in different circumstances, the navigation of the winding river on which he sailed would have afforded the highest gratification possible; the shores on either hand, though generally flat, were not, by any means, unpicturesque, for they were clothed with groups of trees, in great variety, and to an European eye mostly new. The orange conspicuously shone with golden fruit, whilst the air was delightfully impregnated with its fragrant blossoms; the plantains waved their umbrageous

brageous foliage, and seemed to invite the travellers to their cooling bowers; the elegant areca-nut tree and more sombre-tinted lime mingled their hues; and flowering shrubs, to which our young hero could not give a name, were spread in endless and agreeable confusion on every side.

The habitations too, which very frequently presented themselves, were singularly striking, being built principally of bamboo, and raised on wooden pilasters, several feet from the ground.

During the first day's voyage they went ashore twice, and took refreshment with persons who, from their train of attendants, appeared of the first importance, and at night were lodged with every

every possible attention to accommodation.

Rodney had his mattress spread in the same room with him whom the whole party obviously looked up to as a superior, and by him was attended on with the affectionate tenderness of the kindest parent.

At the conclusion of the third day, the gaily-ornamented vessels quitted the regular course of the river, and sailed along a narrow cut, which soon terminated in an expansive canal, the banks of which were studded with pleasure-houses of almost every description, from the stately pagoda, of twenty stories, to the humble awning, supported on bamboo poles.

A group of women, under the shade
of

of cocoa trees, accompanied by several children, were amusing themselves, as the voyagers approached, with a game which required the winner to drive a wheel a given number of evolutions by one stroke, for which dexterous feat several elegant toys were the reward.

The entertainment seemed not, however, to interest half so much as the party who were landing, for it was immediately relinquished, and there appeared quite a contest who should be foremost to assist the venerable chief in setting his foot ashore.

Rodney, who at one glance embraced every surrounding object, could not avoid remarking, that during the time his elderly friend conversed with the party who received him, he directed
their

their attention particularly towards him, whilst they in return seemed to answer, with one accord, in the very words he had heard so repeatedly, "Che-vau-tau!"

From the water-side they proceeded through a serpentine passage, of obviously artificial rock-scenery, to an abode which occupied an almost incredible extent of ground, for its numerous apartments were all on the same floor.

Every affectionate attention was lavished most profusely on our friend, the young St. Paul, who appeared at once installed the general favourite of the family.

Amusement, in all its ramifications, was studiously prepared for him. A theatre opened in front of the apartment

ment where he lodged ; jugglers, dancers, tumblers, and the extempore* story-tellers, so well known in all eastern climes, vied with each other continually who should rivet his attention most effectually.

Two venerable male personages were exclusively devoted to his service ; and so unremitting was the exercise of their guardian office, that, excepting when they left him under the eye of the master of the family, or in the apartment of the ladies, they never lost sight of him during the day, and at night were only separated from his sleeping-room by a slight silken drapery.

The

* Though Rodney could not at first understand their stories, yet their gestures and grimaces highly amused him.

The occupation of the morning was invariably teaching their pupil how to express himself in the language of their country, which differs not very materially from the Chinese, and is pretty copiously interlarded with expressions which bespeak a Tartar origin.

It is generally considered a very difficult, if not insurmountable task for an European to become thoroughly conversant with the Chinese tongue—such indeed is its infinity of terms and characters, that it requires a whole, and not a very short life, to become acquainted with them.

In addition to a particularly retentive memory, Rodney had a very urgent spur for assiduity in his new undertaking, when he considered that on his
capability

capability of expressing himself rested the chance of explaining how he came there, and his earnest wish for rejoining his countrymen, who, by this time, were probably travelling over land to Peking, if they had not already reached the imperial court: he fagged, therefore, with a ceaseless industry, and in the course of even a very few weeks, was able to designate familiar objects by their appropriate appellations, and make known his most pressing wants.

He was soon able to converse intelligibly on almost any subject, with his instructors, and from them learnt some extraordinary particulars in the domestic history of his preserver, the mandarin, Fi-cham-tau, which kindled in his affectionate bosom the most generous pity, and quite incapacitated him

from

from immediately expressing a desire of finding some method of pursuing the footsteps of the British embassy.

CHAP.

CHAPTER VIII.

Submit thy soul to Heav'n's all-wise decree;
 Perhaps his life had blasted more thy hopes
 Than e'en his grievous end.

MISS BAILLIE.

THE venerable mandarin, Pi-cham-tau, had been married many years; and, according to the custom of the country he inhabited, divided his attentions among several wives and mistresses, many of whom proved fruitful, though not one, through a long course of years, presented him with a son*; this was a grievous

* Being without a son is, in China, and most of its tributary

grievous disappointment to a man whose possessions were ample.

In vain were offerings presented at the shrines of his domestic deities, and in the temples of the most celebrated idols throughout the tributary kingdom of Cochin-China.

In vain, likewise, were his applications to the wisest astrologers* of the time, from consulting whom he could not be deterred by journeys even to the remotest provinces of the vast Chinese empire.

The

tributary provinces, considered so great a misfortune, that a man may obtain a divorce on that account.

* It is astonishing, according to the report of the most authentic travellers, what implicit reliance many inhabitants of the eastern countries have upon the opinion of their soothsayers; they consult them on almost every occasion, and unhesitatingly act according to their commands.

The prophecies, in some instances, were favourable; but, alas! they all faded into air at the moment when completion was expected.

This frequent failure of a darling hope wrought so powerfully on the mind of the unhappy Fi-cham-tau, that he seemed gradually sinking into a state which bore every alarming symptom of incipient insanity.

Such was the esteem in which this unfortunate man was held by his family, that it appeared their united study to divert his fancy in every possible way. But ineffectual proved the attempt! the most luminous fireworks scintillating on the dark face of night to no purpose—the humours of the pantomimic theatre excited not a smile—the gigantic, almost reasoning elephant, went through

his extraordinary manœuvres, without the reward of one approving glance from him whom all were endeavouring to animate: in short, he viewed every scene, every change, with an equally apathetic air, and received only fatigue where his friends designed amusement.

From this alarming state he was at length roused by the despaired-of information, that his most favourite wife had presented him with a son.

What a different being did the mandarin now become! the cloud of despondency floated from his countenance, and like the gold-winged butterfly emerging from a torpid chrysalis, he seemed to gain a new existence.

Festivity and rejoicing exhibited themselves, in almost endless change, on every

every side; the monstrous inhabitants of every temple and pagoda in the neighbourhood were almost inundated with such offerings as the ministering priests pronounced most acceptable.

The infant was named Che-vau-tau, which, for any thing the writer knows to the contrary, may, according to oriental custom, admit of some such interpretation as "Sun of Beauty," or "Child of Hope;" be this as it might, he was certainly well entitled to these, or similar epithets, for in the course of a very few years he became the universal wonder for his exquisite beauty and extraordinary genius, and a complete object of adoration to his doting father and affectionate sisters. Unfortunately his mother died in the same moment when she gave him birth.

Who now exultingly anticipated that the successor to his numerous honours and extensive possessions should be of an immortal fame?—who now daily and nightly was employed in scheme on scheme for the aggrandizement of his promising heir, but the mandarin, Ficham-tau?

Thus satisfactorily engaged, did nine delightful years glide silently away.

Alas! mournful uncertainty of mundane bliss! Ah, mistaken those who think any thing sure on this side the grave!

A cloud of thick darkness was gathering over the dwelling—was bursting, spending its violence on the head of the little-suspecting mandarin.

The youthful darling suddenly sickened, and, like a flower untimely cropped,

ped, hung his beauteous head, and died.

Heavily on all, but heaviest, as may be supposed, on the bereaved father, fell the dreadful, irremediable shaft. He sunk under it at first, like a man instantaneously overwhelmed by the thunderbolt from heaven; and when at length he recovered physical strength enough to rear his head from the ground, he appeared so stunned with the blow, as to exhibit little more animation than a statue.

In this deplorable state he remained during many a revolving day: months even elapsed before his paralyzed faculties received any thing of their former tone; and then it was by very slow degrees that they revived. He looked round like a man "emerging from a sea

of dreams*," doubting whether the prominent idea were real or imaginary. Its reality remained not long equivocal; he called for his child—the welcome voice replied not; he sought him—"his place was not to be found."

A copious shower of tears ensued the sad discovery; this salutary vent relieved oppressed nature, and most probably prevented a violent display of desperate grief.

But did it wash away the feeling? Ah no! grief was here too real, too deep to be expressed by boisterous raving; it assumed a far more alarming aspect—it was of that quiet, unassuming, uncomplaining sort, which proved the heart oppressed beyond the power of expression.

The

* Young.

The only enjoyment that life seemed to furnish was that of weeping on the grave of his departed child; and this he indulged in very frequently, though the place of interment lay at a very considerable distance from his dwelling.

The spot where the sacred relics were deposited was called "the Valley of Tombs," from the circumstance of many of the principal Cochin-Chinese families having selected it as their cemetery. It was a place by nature peculiarly adapted for seclusion and retreat, being encircled on every side with rising grounds, excepting that which gradually sloped down to a lake, supplied with beautifully transparent water from an ever-falling cascade.

Agreeable to the prevalent taste of the country, it had been adorned with

a whimsical variety of rock-scenery, and planted with every tree of funereal aspect; above all, the weeping willow, which there grew to an enormous size, hung its pensile foliage in mournful profusion.

Various as the bodies consigned to moulder in "this place of graves," were the monumental piles erected by surviving affection.

On one hand rose the light and elegant pagoda, of many storied heights, thickly studded with the images of tutelary saints; and, on the other, perhaps the humblest structure imaginable unostentatiously protected the ashes of the dead.

The tomb of the lamented Che-vau-tau differed considerably from every other sepulchral edifice in its vicinity :
it

it formed a small circular apartment, supporting on its roof an elevated pyramid, shaped somewhat like a mitre, and was completely overshadowed by a prodigiously umbrageous willow.

Beneath its consecrated canopy the afflicted parent passed many a melancholy hour, during visits of several days' continuance, which, accompanied by his family, he paid many times in the course of twelve months to the gloomy vale.

The doctrine of transmigration of souls prevails very generally among the Chinese and their tributary neighbours. The religious party which influenced the mandarin Fi-cham-tau were amongst the number of its most strenuous advocates; and such was the effect which this extraordinary faith produced upon

the disordered mind of the old gentleman, that from it he received his only comfort—it wrought within him a delusive expectation, that his deplored child's spiritual part had passed into some new body, which when presented to him, he should immediately and instinctively know, and so become repossessed of his lost treasure.

To hasten the fulfilment of this strange expectation, he spent the greatest part of his time in going from the shrine of one celebrated idol to another; and it was no inconsiderable proportion of his ample revenues which went towards propitiating the gods.

These pilgrimages were invariably concluded with a visit to the "Valley of Tombs;" and it was during one of them that the venerable mandarin, whilst
pacing

pacing the banks of the neighbouring lake, beheld a human body floating on the face of its undulating waters : now the unfortunate wretch, buoyed up by the waves, seemed swimming fast ashore—again he sunk from observation : once his face was partially revealed—enough was discernible to work up the feelings of Fi-cham-tau to the highest pitch of enthusiasm—in short, he fancied he again beheld his long-lamented son.

Without the smallest hesitation, he plunged into the water, and in a few seconds fortunately succeeded in landing the almost-exhausted body.

Assistance was at hand, for the mandarin never strayed very far from his attendants.

“ Thanks be to the great and benefi-

G 6

cent

cent Fo, the request of my lips has been granted! my child, my long-regretted Che-vau-tau, is once more embodied in a human form—once more my own!” exclaimed the old gentleman, though half suffocated with the water, as he deposited his valued burthen on the green bank of the lake.

All hands were speedily employed; and, in an incredibly short time, the nearly drowned boy was placed on a mattress, and the mandarin supplied with dry garments.

The existence of a wonderful resemblance borne by Rodney to the departed Che-vau-tau could not fail striking the whole party; and such was the effect it produced, when he was dressed *à la Cochín-Chinoise*, that they involuntarily

tarily joined in the overjoyed mandarin's exclamation—"It is, it must be our lost Che-vau-tau!"

Had any thing been wanting to confirm the old man's conviction that the darling of his heart was really restored to him, nothing could have been better calculated for the purpose than this unanimous acknowledgment; it rendered even assurance doubly sure—it kindled intelligent expression in an eye which, during many a day gone past, had been fixed in almost idiotic vacancy.

His daughters hailed with rapture the auspicious change; and, to insure its permanency, endeavoured, by every external testimony, to evince a full persuasion of their brother's resuscitation; nor is this, even supposing them divest-
ed

ed wholly of their father's prejudices in favour of the doctrine of transmigration of souls, more than might be expected, when we consider the high estimation in which filial duty is held by all the followers of Fo, who allow to children, of whatever age or rank, scarcely a will independent of their father and mother, and who suffer not any thing, however severe, to be called a sacrifice, when yielded in compliance with parental mandates.

That the priests of Fo should encourage Fi-cham-tau's strange infatuation will excite no astonishment, when we reflect that they draw their principal support from enthusiastic devotees, and that the case before them, by judicious management, promised incalculable advantages.

With

With the mandarin the part they had to sustain was rendered easy, by the avidity with which his distempered imagination received every impression connected with the acknowledgment of Che-vau-tau's restoration.

Not of the same facile nature appeared the task of managing Rodney ; his intelligent countenance testified a superior mind, and from his years they naturally apprehended he must have imbibed opinions in his own country, completely at variance with their own monstrous doctrine, which all their sophistry would combat in vain.

Fortunately for the prosecution of their plans, Rodney, on his arrival, had neither the power of explaining his situation by words, or understanding the language of those around him ; they consequently
had

had time to precede action by deliberation, and from studying his character as it gradually unfolded to the view, discover the most likely method of eventually moulding him to their purposes.

CHAP.

CHAPTER IX.
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Quoth Ralph, not far from hence doth dwell  
A cunning man, hight Sidrophel,  
That deals in destiny's dark counsels,  
And sage opinions of the moon sells.

• • • • •  
Then let us straight advance in quest  
Of this profound Gymnosophist ;  
And as the fates and he advise,  
Pursue or wave this enterprise.

BUTLER.

THE venerable personages whom we have already invested with the important office of Rodney's guardians and instructors were, as will be easily guessed from what has gone before, selected from  
Fi-

Fi-cham-tau's favourite priests. They readily perceived the extraordinary capacity of their pupil, strikingly manifested by his rapid acquirement of their difficult language.

Of the qualities of his heart an ingenuous countenance spoke most favourably; and that among them might be classed a peculiarly warm sense of benefits received was clearly testified by the most respectful attention to instruction, and an unceasing endeavour to display gratitude in every possible shape to all around, but more particularly to the preserver of his life.

On this trait in his character, his tutors, Lin-ta and Che-che, dwelt with extraordinary pleasure—not so much, perhaps, from its intrinsic excellence, as the certain and easy method it opened  
of

of working upon his feelings, and influencing him to act in conformity with their mercenary designs.

Our affectionately-disposed hero would have hearkened with interest to a story of distress, though the parties had been utter strangers to him—what then must we expect to have been his sensations, when, in the most pathetic terms, the domestic sorrows of that being who had snatched him from a watery grave were unfolded to his ear? Could his eye be expected to withhold the copious shower of tears? his breast the sigh of agony?

The effect produced infinitely exceeded the expectation of the crafty narrators, Lin-ta and his companion; they saw plainly the “vantage ground” on which they stood; and, without allowing

ing

ing time for Rodney's excited feelings to subside, followed up the detail of Che-vau-tau's sudden death, by a moving description of his father's melancholy insanity, his sleepless nights, his wearisome days, his tedious pilgrimages, his repeated voyages to the "Valley of Tombs," his long-indulged hope that his son would yet be restored to him, and, finally, his confident persuasion of his singular expectation's fulfilment, which took possession of his mind at the moment when he rescued the perishing Rodney from destruction.

"To immediately dispute the reality of this exhilarating conviction," added they, "might produce fatal consequences; his malady would doubtless resume its most terrific form, or perhaps immediate death ensue. Give the unhappy



happy man but time, and it is possible his reasoning powers may recover strength enough to convince him of the fallacy of his present conclusions. But all, dear young friend, rests with you—you seem the arbiter of the worthy mandarin's fate; he may still be continued to us, or lost for ever!"

Rodney felt as much as could be felt for one to whom we owe the weightiest obligation; but he was averse from the deceit which must be practised by a voluntary assumption of the character of the mandarin's son.

"The motives which impel your conduct, if you *do* assume that character," argued the priests, "will amply justify it; and instead of injuring Fi-cham-tau by humouring his belief, you will be rendering him an essential kindness—  
you

you will be conducing to the composure of his long-agitated mind, and delightfully soothing the few remaining years of his earthly journey—*Few*, alas! they will probably be, for his constitution, never robust, must have sustained irreparable injury from agitations of such long and uninterrupted duration. Dear youth, you relent—your scruples give way—your countenance tells me that, at least for the present, you will receive the caresses of the excellent Ficham-tau as those proceeding from a father.”

To prove that Lin-ta and his coadjutor were tolerable physiognomists, we must acknowledge that they guessed pretty accurately the employment of Rodney's mind at this moment, for he was in reality endeavouring to conform himself

himself to their wishes, striving to array the deceptive part he must put on in the garb of a pious fraud, authorized by peculiar circumstances, and dictated by gratitude to the greatest of benefactors.

At length he resolved, and announced his intention of regulating, at any rate his immediate motions, by the advice of the priests; but still he consented not to this unconditionally—he stipulated for the privilege of writing to his friends in Great Britain, and bound Lin-ta and Che-che in a solemn promise to forward his letters by the very first European ships which anchored in Turon Bay, near which (though distant three days' journey from the mandarin's general residence) one or other of them

was

was professionally engaged several times in the course of the year.

Aware of the dreadful anxiety into which his extraordinary disappearance would plunge his affectionate relatives at Marton and the Abbey, Rodney allowed not many hours to elapse without commencing a written detail of all that had befallen him since his separation from the embassy, and the likelihood there appeared of his present singular circumstances detaining him from his dear native island during a considerable lapse of time.

“ I cannot say, after all,” observed he, in a part of his epistle, exclusively addressed to Fanny Sharkem; “ that I should regret having fallen into my present curious situation—that is, as a temporary

temporary change, were I not at such an immense distance from you and my beloved relations, for it abounds with novelties of every possible description, which, like the wonders of a moving panorama, are changing every moment, and realize, in a most extraordinary manner, the visionary anticipations of what was to befall me during my Sinbad-like voyages, in which, you will recollect, I indulged very freely, whilst reading the marvellous travellers of antiquity, preserved in the old library at Napperton Abbey; and of this you would be satisfactorily convinced, could I present your Rodney to you in his full Cochin-Chinese costume of flowing black silk—with his tutors in mitres, robes, and rosaries, strongly resembling those used in the Roman Catholic

church—his turbaned and plaided page and pipe-bearer—his mandarin papa, and sisters to the number of twelve : could I likewise delineate his avocations and amusements, following each other in an almost endless succession ; but on these, and ‘ a thousand and one ’ occurrences extraordinary, he lives in hopes of being eloquent during many a long winter’s night, in Mrs. Mary’s parlour, at the Abbey.

“ The distance at which these dearly-longed-for evenings may be from me, I dare not even trust myself to think upon, lest, unmindful of the debt of gratitude which binds me here, I should leave the good mandarin, Fi-cham-tau, to the frightful ravages of his deplorable malady, and endeavour to accomplish an escape to old England.

“ That

“That my continuance in this country is not entirely dependent on the duration of the mandarin’s life, I sometimes hope, for surely a belief that I am in reality his deceased son is too absurd, for a man, whose general demeanour bespeaks not incurable insanity, to perseveringly maintain, particularly where it is quite an improvement on the strange doctrine of transmigration, which, as far as I can learn, merely teaches that the souls of departed persons may, for the wise purposes of the Almighty Father, or as a sort of purgatory for sins done in the flesh, be born again into the world, in some new form. Now, in my extraordinary case, I must be considered as a completely reanimated body, walking in the face of day, after

H 2

above

above three years consignment to the silent grave, and, which adds considerably to the miracle, having attained the increase of stature that might have been expected, though the course of nature had met with no interruption.

“What causes me to think that some confused notion he is in error floats upon the brain of the mandarin is, a visit which I find we are on the eve of making to a famous astrologer, whom he has been in habits of consulting on all pressing emergencies, and who resides on the line of mountains which divide this kingdom from Cambodia.

“On the decree of this reputed ‘wise man of the east,’ rests therefore the confirmation or confirmation of my identity with Che-van-tau.

“I wish



" I wish most heartily I could hit on some expedient for influencing his decision, for then I should be universally acknowledged as neither more nor less than your really unalterable

" RODNEY ST. PAUL."

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Very soon after the conclusion of this letter, from which we have indulged the reader with the foregoing extracts, it was entrusted to the care of Che-che; and, according to his declaration, on returning from a periodical visit to a temple of Fo, in the vicinity of Turon Bay, was delivered to a Portuguese captain, who solemnly undertook to transmit it by the Lisbon packet to England.

Where the fault lay, cannot, with all

H 3

an

an author's penetration, be determined ; but this we know for certain, that neither it, nor many others, written by the same pen, and addressed to the same parties, ever reached their intended place of destination.

Had they but done so—we cannot resist apostrophizing—what misery would have been prevented !—what agonizing tortures of suspense have been spared to the kind-hearted inhabitants of Napperton Abbey !

Rodney's letter had not, according to his reasonable hopes and calculations, been embarked many days for *home*, before the visit therein alluded to was publicly announced, and almost every member of Fi-cham-tau's family busied in preparations for it.

The

The ladies were principally occupied in forming wreaths and bunches of artificial flowers, baskets and lanterns of beautifully-coloured paper, and various articles of the most costly and highly-finished embroidery. The slaves were busied in selecting and packing the choicest fruits and confectionary, and making the most dazzling and unique fireworks.

Several weeks elapsed before the mandarin and his family were ready to enter the gay vessels, fitted to convey them through the majority of their journey.

The embarkation occupied two days, as several enormous elephants were included in the party; and the apparatus for erecting a temporary theatre, to-

H 4

gether

gether with its multifarious performers, was taken on board.

They sailed, and perhaps a "lighter-hearted crew" never unfurled canvas to the swelling breeze.

The barges, singular to an European eye from their puckered sail, and the immense elevation of their stern above the water's edge, were furnished with every comfort to be found in a Cochin-Chinese house of the first consequence, both as to shelter from the elements, and arrangements for eating and repose; and their masts and rigging were as profusely bedecked with garlands, flags, and streamers, as those of the smaller vessels, which followed like as many floating pavilions, rich in silken awnings, and canopies of gilded and painted wood.

wood-work, in every fanciful variety of form.

These were the day boats of our female voyagers, and in them, whilst enjoying the delicious coolness of the breeze from the water, they were agreeably shaded from the rays of the bright sun, which shone in unclouded splendour upon the enterprise.

The voyage of the first day afforded but little amusement to Rodney, as the banks of the canal presented nothing more than a repetition of level country, intersected by formal rows of willow and alder, with occasional groups of bamboo houses, and sometimes enlivened by the towering stories of a distant pagoda, or a nearer peep at some mitre-domed minar, or temple.

Afterwards the country highly im-

proved in picturesque beauty, and in place of the monotonous swamp, gratified the eye with undulating hills, crowned with wood, sweeping gently down to the very edge of the water.

The curious ceremony which a little preceded their landing was singular enough to arrest Rodney's particular attention: a cock, the conspicuous colour of whose plumage was yellow, was sacrificed with great solemnity to the river-gods, in return for a prosperous voyage; or, as our young friend could not avoid conjecturing, with some reference to his rescue from the waves, in which he felt himself supported by observing the peculiar devotion of Ficham-tau, during the whole transaction.

The

The remainder of the journey was exceedingly amusing to our young traveller, offering at every step something new, as well in respect to the perpetually changing features of the landscape, as the aspect of the inhabitants, and the external of their habitations—I say external, because the mandarin allowed not his attendants to go beneath any roof during their journey, excepting those dedicated to religious purposes; with such they fell in pretty frequently, and as often enriched the idol of the consecrated spot with some valuable present.

As they drew near the place of destination, a wildness of scenery, approaching to sublimity, prevailed, well adapted for the residence of a being like him

H 6

whom

whom they had travelled such an immense length of way for the express purpose of visiting.

The hills rose, line above line, until they might justly be entitled to the epithet of mountains. At a distance they seemed clothed with that delightful purple tint, so lovely to the eye of an artist; when surveyed nearly, their hue was that sombre brown which the high regions of every warm climate almost invariably wear. Scarcely a tree was to be met with for miles; human habitations were still less frequent.

At the commencement of the acclivity on which the sage resided, a temple of wide dimensions reared its lofty head; beneath the consecrated dome our pious travellers



travellers failed not to deposit a propitiatory sacrifice.

The god Fo, and the universal Mother (who, by the way, strongly resembles the Madona of Rome, from being represented with a young child, and crowned with flowers), were the deities of the place, and sat in state, amidst quite a court of minor idols, of form and aspect so truly horrible, that one might be excused suspecting their manufacturers considered ugliness as an object deserving adoration.

Several temple-like edifices, of inferior architecture and extent, occurred, before the travellers reached the place where it was customary for the astrologer's visitants to rest, until they had announced, by an avant courier, their intention of consulting him.

The

The cavalcade, winding up to this elevated spot, alternately appearing and disappearing with the undulations of the mountain, would have furnished an admirable model for theatrical imitation in some oriental romance, and was curious enough to deserve a concise description.

Several slaves, in military costume, wearing vests of dark red cloth, and armed with sabres, and pikes of vast length, ornamented with tassels of hair dyed red, led the way. Then followed Lin-ta and Chie-che, full robed, in caps and habits of silk, with immense rosaries of black beads suspended from the girdle: priests of lower order were in their train, bearing gilded figures of dragons, and images of the gods. The great Fi-cham-tau proceeded next, with

Rodney

Rodney on his left hand, each in a sedan chair, gorgeously painted and gilt. The bearers of the "rewards of divination," in plaided dresses and turbans, thronged close to the carriage of their master.

The presents, concealed from public inspection in immense vases of porcelain, consisted of rare fruits, preserves, garments of silk, the highest flavoured tea and tobacco, areca nut and betel leaf, in bags of rich embroidery, with China pipes of extraordinary elegance.

The female part of the illustrious mandarin's establishment were, like the presents which they immediately followed, shaded from the eye, in vehicles not very dissimilar to a tilted cart, carefully closed

closed on every side by bamboo lattices. Three stately elephants, richly housed, governed by boys, who rode upon their necks, went next; and then came up the packages and performers of the temporary theatre: a long train of attendants, armed, or bearing flags and garlands, and a troop of musicians, playing on instruments resembling, both in form and sound, the Scotch bagpipe, brought up the rear.

The hitherto swelling bosom of the mountain flattened suddenly into an almost level plain, where this numerous party was called upon to halt.

A conical peak, and irregular ridge of rocks, bounded the view upwards; but on looking down, the eye roved without control over an immense range of country.

try, bright in rich verdure, and veined with the blue waters of many a winding river and canal.

Tents were immediately pitched, and in the course of a very few hours the desert might be literally said to swarm with population.

Lin-ta was speedily dispatched to inform the diviner of the mandarin's arrival, and solicit admission to an early interview.

The old priest returned in about an hour, and reported a most gracious reception, but at the same time brought word that Fi-cham-tau must defer entering the cave of the seer until "*a full moon had risen an hour above the apex of the great peak.*"

Three days must elapse before the  
planet

planet of the night would fill her horns: This interval of time hung a little heavy on the hands of the mandarin; but he bore it uncomplainingly, for to him, in the voice of the astrologer—

Th' Almighty spake, nor durst the pow'rs reply,  
A reverend horror silenc'd all the sky!

POPE.

The important moment when Cynthia next revealed “her silvery circle in a cloudless sky,” above the summit of the peak, happened at midnight.

At that solemn season behold the venerable Fi-cham-tau, and our friend Rodney, attended only by Lin-ta, bending their steps to what the leader of their party undoubtedly considered the shrine of an unerring oracle.

The

The hour and scenery were alike calculated to fill the mind with gloomy conceptions; this, I trust, will apologize for my hero, when I confess that his heart beat with somewhat of an unusual palpitation, when he found himself called upon to enter an habitation not made with mortal hand, but a wide and lofty cleft\*, in a prodigious rock. The rude arch of admission, formed no doubt by some violent convulsion of nature, externally expanded on a very grand scale; but on entering its portal the roof gradually lowered, until the passenger could with difficulty advance erect. Again the cavern widened upwards to a very considerable elevation. The gleam of  
moonlight

\* The author had the famous cavern at Castleton in view in this description.

moonlight here was completely lost, and all would have been darkness, but for the lanterns with which Lin-ta had provided his companions.

Another contraction of this natural vault was passed, and they then reached a large dismal hall, lighted by a single flame, in a recess at the upper end of which sat, or, more properly speaking, squatted a human figure, ill agreeing with Rodney's ideas of "one who brooded o'er the midnight lamp, and spent his lonely hours in commerce with the stars."

The extraordinary personage thus presented was corpulent to an immense degree, had a complete rotundity of visage, with small half-shut eyes, a flat nose, and a head which would have  
been



been completely bald, had not a lock of grey hair sprouted from the very centre of its crown, like a tuft on the scholars' cap at Oxford and Cambridge.

His garments of many colours were singularly formed, for they left his breast and body bare quite down to the girdle. Before him stood a very low tripod table, strewn with hieroglyphicked papers in great abundance. On one side were images of Fo and his frightful satellites, with a lamp burning at their feet; and behind him an irregular fissure in the rock allowed the partial view of an interior cavern, faintly lighted, in which shadowy figures were perpetually gliding backward and forward.

The demeanour of the wise man did not strike Rodney as at all conciliating,  
for

for he neither rose up nor spoke on the approach of the mandarin, and received his almost performance of the Ko-teou \* without any ostensible acknowledgment.

Fi-cham-tau seemed overpowered with this unlooked-for coolness, and words failed him when he would have made known his petition.

The eyelids of the sage gradually raised themselves, and he gazed with an interrogatory glance at his visitors.

A pause ensued, and was followed by his throwing powder from the table before him upon a censer standing parallel with the lamp near Fo's image.

A quivering

\* Or *adoration*, as the Chinese term it, without the performance of which no one dare approach the emperor.

A quivering blue flame curled upwards for a minute, a thick smoke instantly filled the cave, and a low, but clear and distinct voice, was heard, interrogating—"Why cometh he attended?"

Lin-ta caught the hand of Rodney; and, before he well knew where he was, he found himself once more in the open air, and beheld the moonbeams darting their silvery splendour on the tents of the mandarin's party.

"Is my dear preserver safe?" was the only inquiry of our young and affectionate hero; and on hearing his question affirmatively answered, he retired to the enjoyment of that sweet repose which is seldom refused to the eyelids of innocence.

Lin-ta

Lin-ta sat at the side of his mattress when he awoke, and cheered him with the acceptable intelligence that the mandarin returned from the cavern in tolerable spirits; and, as a proof that he and the astrologer were on friendly terms, announced that the latter was to be his guest, during several days, and intended to partake of the entertainments which had been provided for him, with every possible attention to variety and magnificence.

Rodney's entreaties for information as to the cause and result of the mandarin's visit to the scene of last night's strange adventures, were too pressing to be long resisted by his friend Lin-ta; and from him he consequently learnt that Fi-cham-tau had, for some time past,

past, been agitated with a painful apprehension that the being whom he snatched from the water in the "Valley of Tombs" was not in reality his regretted son: this had got possession of his imagination during a temporary clearness of intellect, which allowed him to wonder at the supposed Che-vau-tau's utter ignorance of his native tongue. On this he had brooded night and day, until it spake to him something bordering on conviction.

But who gives up a darling hypothesis without many struggles? Who would voluntarily lose a son so promising as Rodney?

There *was* an individual who, according to Fi-cham-tau's prejudices, could rightly solve the momentous point: to

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I

him

him he resolved on going—by his opinion he determined to be entirely guided.

“ And what,” asked Rodney, with an almost breathless impatience, “ what, my dear good Lin-ta, is the opinion of the sage ?”

“ That,” returned the priest, “ is yet unknown, even to the mandarin himself: answers on such occasions are invariably ambiguous, consequently indecisive. Subsequent to our departure from the cave, and the dispersal of the smoke, the mandarin ventured to explain the occasion of his visit.

“ A grumbling murmur of disapprobation was for some time all that met his ear; as it died away, the flame in the lamp at Fo's feet revived, and he beheld

beheld the astrologer before the images in an attitude of supplication.

“ The gods relented, if we may judge from the brightening fire, and the countenance of the suppliant. The latter suddenly resumed his squatting posture, and bending forward, delivered, without a word, into the hand of his visitor a written paper, merely containing an announcement that ‘ *under the sepulchre of Che-vau-tau, in the Valley of Tombs, would be found a decided answer to his interrogations.*’

“ Fi-cham-tau bent in grateful acknowledgment, and then, after a respectful pause, ventured to request the sage’s participation in such amusements as present circumstances allowed him to offer.

I 2 .

“ A bow

"A bow was the only symptom of acceptance; but this the mandarin considered quite sufficient to ensure his appearance as a visitor in our tents; so tomorrow we expect the supreme honour of this sapient gentleman's company, and then the presents prepared for him will be delivered."

Early the next morning the mandarin's state sedan, with a double canopy, attended at the entrance of the astrologer's lonely abode, and very shortly after received its '*deep learned*' load.

Fi-cham-tau's people were drawn up in solemn array to welcome the important guest.

The ladies came forth to receive him in their gayest and richest attire; and  
under



under their silken pavillion, he had the particular privilege of being presented with his favourite ~~areca~~-nut and betel leaf.

After a sufficient pause being allowed for refreshment, the performers on the stage commenced their operations; and, by the smiles they elicited from the turgid muscles of the seer, we may conclude excelled particularly in the comic department.

The elephants too performed most admirably, and, as a reward, had the supreme felicity of receiving, from the hands of the sage himself, honeyed bread, and the most delicious confectionary.

The entertainments were continued three successive days; at the expiration of which the astrologer, together with

the fruits of his labour, was escorted back in great state to his secluded habitation in the cavern of the peak.

CHAP.

CHAPTER X.  


Ah! let me not prescribe a bound to Heaven!  
'Twas by a miracle the child was given;  
Nor can I think the wonder is more great,  
If the departed soul resume her seat.

STEPHEN DUCK.

It will not be supposed that more than the absolutely necessary time was consumed in the mandarin Fi-cham-tau's journey and voyage homeward, or that the prescribed visit to the "Valley of Tombs" would be very long postponed.

Rodney and his patron approached  
I 4 the

the place of graves with equally agitated feelings : pleasing anticipations, though of different origin, exhilarated the bosom of each : the former flattered himself with a speedy release from his present singular and embarrassing situation ; the latter, that the hour was at hand when every painful doubt should disperse in air, and assurance, clear as the voice of Heaven could make it, establish his " dear warm hope."

The consecrated dome was before them—the portals were thrown open. What an awful moment for the poor mandarin ! here it was he had committed to the dust his only earthly delight—here that he had kept many a mournful vigil.

He was almost overcome with melancholy

choly recollections; but hope, sweet soother, revived him, and he passed forward into the dreary tomb.

Silence and desertion reigned on every side—the walls were black and damp with unwholesome dew, drops of which hung, like pendants of sparkling jet, even on the hallowed images of the gods, which frowned terrifically on every side.

In vain did he look round for any thing in the shape of the promised answer to his queries! His heart throbbed violently—his sanguine spirit failed—he felt himself assuredly undone.

On the ground behold him prostrate, in all the agonies of despair.—“Oh, Fo!” cried he, raising his eye as he spoke to the colossal figure of that deity

—"oh, Fo! thou hast deceived——" but he completed not the sentence, for he saw before him a scroll, in the hand of the idol, inscribed with characters bearing this interpretation:—

*"The grave has given up her dead! Search!"*

To what a revival did this short sentence give birth! He rose quickly: Lin-ta waited not for orders—the attendants were called, and in a very short time the white tiles, which formed the pavement, were displaced; the earth that had once been cast upon the corpse of Che-vau-tau was again thrown up—the coffin appeared—Awful and important crisis! the next movement must raise the mandarin to the most rapturous felicity, or plunge him in irremediable woe.

The

The lid was raised—relics of a human body appeared not!—Words to the following effect presented themselves:—

*“ This empty receptacle of mortality speaks the beneficence of the gods !*

*“ Fo heard thy persevering prayer !*

*“ The universal Mother groaned to give thy child a second birth !*

*“ The Ruler of the waters presented him to thee !*

*“ They sent him from silence, perfect as if the current in his veins had never ceased to flow—fresh with youthful vigour, and improved in size and form !*

*“ And yet this marvellous magnificence of goodness was not sufficient for thee ! Thou must DOUBT, because he*

*spake not the language of thy fathers!*

“ **KNOW, *Pi-cham-tau*, THIS WAS FOR THE TRIAL OF THY FAITH!**

“ *Beware lest obstinacy and disbelief should make the gods repent their kindness, and take back their GIFT—then would thy name perish upon earth!*  
**BEWARE !”**

When we reflect on the state of the old mandarin's mind, and how his feverish imagination had been fermented by recent circumstances, we shall readily conceive how overwhelming he would find the task of reading the above sentences, traced, as *he* was perfectly persuaded, by an immortal finger.

For some minutes he stood, like one bewildered in a pathless maze, without

“ or



"or sun, or moon, or star," to light his steps: his "eyes were open, but their sense was shut."

Lin-ta could not suppress a painful self-reproach, as he gazed upon the living monument before him; his conscience *would* be heard proclaiming—  
"This is *thy* work! Thy mercenary designs are defeated! Thou hast stretched the cord so tightly, it has burst!"

The first position was strictly and literally true, for in Lin-ta's suggestions the mandarin's strange delusion originated—by his artifices they were nourished! his representations influenced the astrologer's motions, his confidential agents removed the body of Che-van-tau from the grave; by his hands the  
different

different scrolls had been written and placed. Well then might he tremble when conscience declared "this is thy work!"

The latter part of the internal monitor's representation was merely a sinner's spontaneous apprehension of judgment's approach, which the wicked always feel, when their nefarious designs are interrupted, for Fi-cham-tau awoke from his trance, and gradually evinced decided symptoms of consciousness.

He was carried to the cabin of his barge, on the lake, and transported home with all possible expedition. There care and attention of every description surrounded him; his wish appeared the universal law, and by none more than our tender-hearted Rodney, who watched

ed

ed his pillow, and presented his medicines with truly filial assiduity.

Of this Fi-cham-tau was duly and gratefully sensible, for on his supposed son his eye almost invariably rested, and from his hand the bitterest potion seemed suddenly impregnated with honeyed sweetness.

Days, weeks, and months, rolled over, and beheld the afflicted mandarin still in the same deplorable condition : he could walk occasionally, and converse at times with tolerable accuracy ; but it was with *one person*, and *on one subject* : *who* and *what* the person and subject were, I need scarcely say, for the reader will readily guess, and as spontaneously exclaim, “ the imaginary Che-vau-tau.”

The mandarin, however, though thus  
occupied

occupied with the contemplation of him whom he thought to be his son, forgot not, at the same time, the hand from whom he fancied that his blessing came; for scarcely a day went by, which witnessed not gifts and offerings of considerable value to the different shrines of Fo, and the universal Mother.

At the expiration of the sixth year from the time of Rodney's arrival in Cochin-China, the mandarin, Fi-cham-tau, rather suddenly departed; and never, perhaps, notwithstanding his eccentricities, was an individual more generally and genuinely lamented: his richer neighbours had lost one who vied not with them in any thing but a reciprocity of kindly acts; his indigent inferiors one from whom they never went without

without relief; the ministers of his religion never could expect "to look upon his like again;" for years he had, as it were, kept their altars in a continual blaze: in truth, there was but one creature living who felt any sensation but that of sorrow for his death, and that was Rodney, who, although he had assuredly lost the kindest, most munificent of benefactors, could not overlook, in the event, the liberty which it granted him of seeking an immediate return to old England, of which he determined to take the very earliest advantage.

Being on the most familiar footing with Lin-ta, to him he unreservedly communicated his intention.

The priest raised not any objection,  
but

but advised caution and secrecy in his proceedings.

“ For,” observed he, “ as in this country filial obedience does not terminate at a father’s grave, witness the images of departed parents preserved in every family, and the worship paid to them ; so the daughters of the deceased Ficham-tau, even in opposition to private opinion, will feel themselves in duty bound to acknowledge and support you as their brother ; and, I almost believe, would resort to compulsory methods for detaining you here, if they at all suspected your design of quitting us. If, however, you are seriously anxious to return to Europe, it will not, I think, be difficult for me to get you privately on board a ship bound for Lisbon, for  
such

such at this season of the year are often watering in the Bay of Turon, and into that neighbourhood I am going during the next moon."

Rodney repeated his firm determination of departing, with all convenient speed, for Great Britain.

At the next private conference, it was settled that Rodney should accompany his friend the priest on his excursion, and that, if a vessel should happen to be off the coast, whose captain would take him on board as a passenger, he should then bid adieu to the Asiatic shores.

Their journey towards the bay was delightful—could it indeed be otherwise to poor Rodney, when every step of it was carrying him nearer to that home  
after

after which his heart had so long and sincerely yearned?

For the moment the perils and dangers of a long voyage, the immeasurable leagues he had to traverse, the probable interruptions of his course, the disappointments which might await him, even when landed on his native coast, were all forgotten. Merciful arrangement of a wise Providence, which thus enables us to catch a transient sunbeam! Were future evils known to us, without a power of averting them, we should live but for "sadness and continual tears;" the storm, neither to be turned aside nor avoided, would wound even before it burst upon our head.

As if purposely to increase his happy buoyancy of spirits, the first object which  
met



met Rodney's eye, on looking down upon the expansive and beautiful bay, was a large European merchantman, whose boat was rowing towards the town of Taron. The vessel proved a Portuguese, and homeward bound ; she was to sail with the next tide.

The captain, to whom, through his knowledge of the French language, he explained his singular situation, readily agreed to convey him to Lisbon ; and for this, it is but justice to Lin-ta to acknowledge he was amply remunerated by presents of rice, vegetables, and poultry, which he sent on board in great abundance.

It had been Rodney's intention to have written an affectionate epistle of adieus to the daughters of the late mandarin, Fi-cham-tau ; but such was the  
hurry

hurry of his departure, that all was left to the explanation of the old priest, who was thus at liberty to account for the disappearance of his pupil in such manner as best suited himself and his purposes.

**CHAP.**

CHAPTER XI.  
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Fresh woes, oh, *youth* divine,
Fresh trials must be thine !
Ah ! what must thou, Ladurlad, yet endure !
But let your heart be strong,
And bear ye bravely on,
For Providence is good, and virtue is secure.

SOUTHEY.

WITH rapture, which the most fluent and eloquent pen would fail in attempting to describe, did Rodney once more behold, himself surrounded by European countenances—did he see the anchor weighed, and the canvas swelled by “favouring gales.”

He

He was started for Europe—the goal, though distant, seemed in view, the wreath of victory within his reach; but the highest of authorities says, “the race is not always to the swift, any more than the battle to the strong.”

Wind and weather proved particularly auspicious for many weeks. They called at St. Helena, that insulated rock, which now bounds the wanderings of him who once traversed Europe with his colossal strides.

Again they sailed—again the heavens smiled on their voyage—but, alas! even the heavens sometimes smile treacherously.

One evening, after the sun had sunk serenely to repose, the sky suddenly assumed an unusual darkness; the winds arose, and seemed to blow with equal violence

violence from every point of the compass; the thunder roared incessantly, and one flash of lightning scarcely faded before another darted its flaming zigzag over the black sky; the sails which were up at the commencement of this dreadful tempest were shivered into ribbons, before they could be hauled down; the mainmast soon fell, and carried away with it the most useful part of the rigging.

For three whole days did this rage of elements continue with unabated fury. On the evening of the third day, as distinctly as the thick atmosphere would allow, they beheld an irregular outline of coast, towards which the wind, now blowing strongly landwards, was irresistibly impelling them.

At midnight the ship struck, and

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K

with

with such force had she been driven, that she appeared literally fixed upon a pointed ridge of rocks, and fixed immoveably, for the surge, which perpetually beat against her sides, made not the smallest change in her position.

Daylight came, but with it brought no cheering prospect; all around seemed interminable rock.

From the direction in which the wind had lately forced them, it was conjectured they had fallen on the inhospitable coast of Africa—Africa, so justly terrible to the shipwrecked, where no “offices of soft humanity” were to be expected—where slavery assumed its most terrific form.

A hazy morning by no means improved the prospect: to the shore, however,

ever, they must go—it was the only alternative from a watery grave, for the ship must, in the nature of things, break up in the course of a few tides. The boats were yet lashed safely to the decks—in them the crew flattered themselves they might reach *terra firma* in safety.

Out of three boats, two perished from the violence of the surge; the survivor was fortunately carried by the tide up a creek, which led to a natural dock, or basin, protected on all sides by rising banks of rock.

On board of this was Rodney, the almost brokenhearted Rodney, for he had heard and read of African captivity, and looked upon his present situation as certain death to his hopes of ever more visiting dear England.

Though it was broad daylight when the survivors of this unfortunate crew stepped from their boat, yet there was nothing appeared in a reviving form; all, on the one hand, was sterile rock—on the other, a boiling ocean, which never sent a wave towards them unaccompanied by the body of a drowned comrade, or some mournful proof that the ship was breaking to pieces.

A barrel of biscuit, and another of water, were all the provisions they had saved.

Shelter, more than the boat, which they had hauled ashore, afforded when turned bottom upwards, and supported by the oars, they had none.

As night came on, the storm, which had proved so fatal to them, subsided; and

and on the following morning the heavens and the sea alike assumed the most tranquil appearance.

But what were such appearances to wretches so situated! To sea they feared to venture in their little boat, without provisions—inland they could not go without a certainty of encountering enemies, “more fell than winds, or waves.”

Their only hope rested on the appearance of some passing vessels towards which the boat would enable them to row.

But no such method of escape occurred; once indeed a tantalizing distant sail gladdened their eyes; alas! it soon faded to a speck, and then vanished.

In almost any other situation they might have procured provisions of some

sort—here all was unbroken sterility—a blade of grass, or a drop of fresh water seemed not to be within reach.

To penetrate the country was a measure which would probably conduct to very terrible evils; yet being the only alternative from perishing by hunger, it must be resorted to.

“For surely,” argued they with one consent, “the most savage barbarism can inflict nothing so dreadful as the slow lingering death which awaits us here?”

If they had perused the pathetic narratives of Riley and Adams, I doubt whether this would have been their opinion; but it is well nothing like them had fallen in their way, for then, perhaps, in a paroxysm of despair, they would have plunged into a watery grave,

grave, or dashed themselves in pieces on the rocks, rather than run the risk of being exposed to the brutality of the inhospitable Arab tribes.

On the morning which succeeded the determination of exploring, they commenced their progress over the rugged rocks, which extended their sharply-pointed, and in many instances lofty ridges, so far up the country, that many hours of painful labour were consumed in crossing them; and then—oh, what a prospect rewarded their severe toils!

It was indeed, we may emphatically declaim, “a barren and dry land, where no water was;” nor tree, nor plant, nor house, nor living thing appeared: far and wide stretched a long unbroken line of waste—unbroken perhaps I ought not

to call it, for its dull uniformity was frequently interrupted by moving sand raised on the wind, in such prodigious pillars as to partially obscure the face of the horizon.

“What shall we do?” whilst they gazed mournfully and hopelessly on this frightful wilderness, was the universal exclamation, and it remained long, long unanswered—for, where none can propose a plan, or point out a path, but what conducts to almost sure destruction, the tongue has no great facility of utterance.

As if some commanding power had cried “halt!” the whole party stood still on a rocky ledge, which formed the border of the dreary desert.

The pause, without the aid of words,
decidedly

decidedly proclaimed a general opinion that procedure promised not any amelioration to their sufferings.

A consultation which ensued proved this to be the feeling of all; and it was agreed, at least for the night, to have recourse to the shelter afforded by their boat.

The next day was spent in surveying the rough scar on which their fine vessel had perished, and they felt amply recompensed for their fatigue by picking up a few barrels of salt beef, and the carcase of a pig, which though much bruised and wounded, still exhibited signs of life.

To this stock of provisions could they have added a supply of fresh water, they would unhesitatingly have ventured out to sea: the Canaries, they cal-

culated, must be within a few days' sail, and thither (if they had not the good luck to be picked up by some passing ship) they flattered themselves they might be able to stretch their course.

Perhaps wells might be discovered by travelling a few leagues across the sands: to ascertain whether any such existed was agreed upon, and, to prevent disputes, lots were drawn who should be the explorers.

Rodney was of the number; and towards the dreary and unpromising wild they journeyed, bearing an almost empty cask, slung on cords, which the party alternately carried.

They began their walk in the afternoon, intending to rest a few hours of the night near to the boundary of the rocks, and thus be ready to start on
their

their wanderings in the desert with the first streak of daylight—an arrangement which promised them several miles march before the sun had risen to any considerable height.

The purposed place of halt was reached in safety, and there, under the projecting shelf of one of the highest rocks, Rodney and his two companions stretched out their weary limbs upon a sandy couch, alone protected from the chill midnight air by a shattered sail, which, besides answering this useful purpose by night, they intended, when supported by some broken oars, to convert into an awning against the noon-tide heat.

Languid and exhausted by their recent fatigues, their eyes soon closed under the acceptable pressure of sleep, that

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OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER OF THE LAND OFFICE
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CHAP.

CHAPTER XII.
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*Similes aliorum respice casus,  
Mitius ista feres.*

QYID.

"Weigh others' woes, and learn to bear thy own."

THE slumberings of this unfortunate triumvirate were not long unbroken, for sounds proclaiming their vicimage to human beings suddenly awoke them.

The noise was loud enough to prove that it arose from a great number of persons, but not sufficiently near to reveal

reveal the language in which they spoke.

With cautious steps, and not a word spoken louder than a whisper, poor Rodney and his friends ascended the top of the rock under which they had been seeking the necessary relief of repose.

A scene was presented, neither likely to produce composure nor to forward the prosecution of their intended travels.

At no considerable distance they beheld a large company of the most hideous-looking wretches that can be conceived in human shape : the outline of their figures was, at the first, all that could be distinctly discerned ; but, in a short time, the rising flames of an immense

mense fire clearly delineated their countenances and employment.

Several men in tattered garments were busy in erecting a tent; others, nearer to the light, held glittering instruments in their hands, probably spears, or hatchets, which they appeared to be sharpening.

Three or four women, surrounded by naked children and shaggy-coated dogs, from their continually approaching and retreating from the fire, they concluded to be dressing supper for their frightful associates.

In the back-ground of the sombre picture, only visible when the smoke was occasionally dispersed by the wind, reposed a considerable number of camels.

There

There was not a feature in this prospect which invited approach; on the contrary, every thing about it was repulsive—every thing declared that here no gentle rite of hospitality could be expected.

If such was the simultaneous feeling of the shipwrecked mariners on first discovering the barbarous group, how must it have been increased when they beheld two wretched, skeleton-like figures, whose faces bespoke them Europeans, drawing near the fire!—when they saw them repelled with the most savage ferocity by the females, who, not satisfied with striking and kicking, pursued them with burning firebrands! The men, too, as if apprehensive their women had not exercised sufficient severity,

verity, joined in the pursuit, and soon levelled their hapless victims with the ground.

The emotions excited in the breasts of Rodney and his companions at this terrible display of cruelty had not time to die away before they beheld two human beings approach slowly towards the rock over which they were looking.

It was too dark to distinguish them with any degree of accuracy; and so silently did they steal along, that probably they would have escaped observation, had it not been for the contrast between their black outline and the light-coloured sand.

As they came near, half-suppressed groans and lowly-muttered complaints were

were accurately heard. The language in which the latter were breathed was Portuguese.

There could be little doubt of the complainants' identity with the maltreated wretches just mentioned: had there been any, it would have soon vanished, for on approaching, their tale of woe became quite intelligible.

"Oh, Alvarez!" cried one of them, "oh, my partner in affliction! that we had died beneath the recently-inflicted blows of our cruel taskmasters! But surely nothing has the power of ending our lives! never will the measure of our woes be full!"

"Be patient, dear Miguel!" said a tremulous voice—"murmur not against the decrees of Him who knoweth what is best

best and fittest for us : at his own good time he will visit us with mercy, and say to the scourge of chastisement, ‘ forbear thy stripe !’

“ You counsel well, and consistently with your spiritual profession,” resumed the first speaker ; “ but yet you must allow ’tis difficult to bear misfortune such as ours without complaint. When,” continued he, after a considerable pause, “ when, during two long years of captivity, have we enjoyed the shelter of a roof against the chill damp breath of night, or the fierce heat of day ? When have we partaken of a wholesome meal ? when had enough to satisfy hunger, even of the loathsome food presented to us ? When, in return for prompt obedience to

to the most unreasonable commands, have we received aught but abuse and insult? Are not our almost naked bodies covered with the indelible marks of brutal violence? Has not our strength failed? can we walk, or use the most trifling exertion, without occasioning ourselves excruciating pain? and, in this wretched state, are we not sent, late as it is, to cross those tremendous rocks, to seek upon the shore for fuel? Oh, it would require more than a Job-like resignation to keep silence!"

"You paint but too truly," answered Alvarez, with a heavy sigh: "but yet, after all, what good end is answered by repining? it will not take one drop from our bitter cup!—nay, dear Miguel,



Miguel, it makes the draught more nauseous, for it deprives us of the consolatory reflection that, as becometh Christians of sound faith, we are cheerfully submitting ourselves to the Supreme Disposer of events!"

"And then," continued Miguel, as if he had not listened to the last address of his friend, "in addition to my own personal sufferings, have I not upon my mind the agonizing reflection of what my poor wife and children may be suffering at Lisbon in consequence of my detention here? Oh, Alvarez! it is—it is impossible to avoid complaining."

A burst of sorrow ensued, which so affected the overhearers of this moving dialogue, that they could neither resist  
audibly

audibly joining in it, nor immediately descending from their elevation, to mingle their tears with those of the unhappy strangers.

An explanation of each party's peculiar circumstances followed of course, and led to urgent entreaties from Alvarez and his brother in affliction, that as their new acquaintances possessed a boat, they should lose no time in making use of it.

"Any thing," said they, "excepting premeditated suicide will be preferable to remaining in this land of oppression. Before to-morrow's noon our brutal masters will have explored every recess of this rock, every winding of the shore, for hither they have come, for the express purpose of gleaning what harvest  
vest

vest the late tremendous storm has left them.

“If you remain here, you must unavoidably fall into their hands. Alternative there is none; and then what is to become of you? Some will be sold, as were the unhappy companions of our shipwreck—others will be retained to occupy the dreadful situations from which death must shortly release us.

“As to the want of water,” continued Alvarez, “which you say has deterred you from braving the ocean, I think, if you will listen to my advice, it may be supplied: the empty cask which you brought hither, if broken up, we may carry back to our vile employers, as wreck collected on the coast. Such a supply

supply of fuel may perhaps prolong their night's carousal; but that very circumstance will have a tendency to send them sleepy to their beds; and whilst their eyes are closed in forgetfulness, what will there be to prevent our conveying hither a skin of water from their abundant stock? We shall not, I should think, feel any qualms of conscience in this appropriation of another's goods to ourselves; but, on the contrary, regard the act as merely taking possession of a thing for which we have paid an enormous price."

"Could such a proposal meet with any thing short of grateful acceptance? Could Rodney and his friends offer less to Alvarez and Miguel, in return for its accomplishment, than to enrol them  
in

in the crew of the little vessel in which they were soon to leave the inhospitable shore of Africa.

The barrel was torn into staves, and soon after the unfortunate captives, bending from excessive weakness, under even so trivial a load, were beheld, "with tottering steps and slow," proceeding towards the tents of the Arabs.

The brightening flames speedily informed our friend Rodney's party that the barbarians had received their supply of firewood.

A loud and hideous yelling, and, from the rapid movement of figures round the fire, a wild dancing soon followed.

By degrees the sparkling light faded,

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and

and shortly the sound of human voices  
died entirely away.

END OF VOL. II.

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# MY OLD COUSIN.

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**A NOVEL.**

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# MY OLD COUSIN;

OR,

A PEEP INTO COCHIN - CHINA.

A Novel.

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IN THREE VOLUMES.

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BY THE AUTHOR OF  
ROMANTIC FACTS, OR WHICH IS HIS WIFE? VERONICA, OR  
THE MYSTERIOUS STRANGER, &c.

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Τὴ μὲν γὰρ γένε' ἑσμεν.

ARATUS OF CILICIA.

We are of this man's family.

Thou art not of the fashion of these times.

SHAKESPEARE.

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VOL. III.

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1819.



# MY OLD COUSIN.

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## CHAPTER I.

---

Sed fugite, O miseri! fugite, atq; ab litore finem  
Rumpite!

---

Vix ea fatus erat, summo cum monte vidam  
Ipsam inter pecudes vasta se mole moxentem,  
Pastorem Polyphemum, et litora nota petentem.

VIRGIL.

Fly, oh wretches! fly this barbarous shore!

Scarcely were these words spoken, when they beheld  
the monstrous Cyclop striding down to the well-  
known coast.

*Paraphrase.*

**E**AGERLY did the anxious trio on  
the rocks look forward, and strain their  
eyesight to catch a glimpse of Alvarez  
and Miguel returning.

VOL. III.

B

Delightedly

Delightedly they perceived what at first appeared not more than two specks of black moving towards them; in a few minutes it was discernible they had the human shape—next it became plain they sustained a burden—finally, and to stifle every doubt, the captives spake, and, nearly exhausted with their labour, presented the required supply of fresh water.

An hour's rest was all that could possibly be allowed, as shortly after sunrise, according to Alvarez's opinion, the Arabs would be preparing for their descent to the coast.

It was not a very easy thing to trace their way over the rocks with their present uncertain glimmering of light; but necessity was laid upon them, and to what extraordinary exertions does it not prompt!

By

By the time when the terrible Africans were expected to awake from their slumbers, the shipwrecked mariners were hauling down their boat to the sea, stowing their provisions in the likeliest way to preserve them, and preparing for embarkation; and fortunate it was they had used this activity and expedition, for within half-an-hour after they had pushed out into the wide ocean, they beheld the hideous wretches, from whose power they had so narrowly escaped, rushing down to the beach, with a ferocity of countenance and demeanour which brought so forcibly to Rodney's recollection a favourite school story of the Cyclops enraged by the loss of their prey, that he almost expected to see them wading with gigantic steps into the water: luckily the Africans fell short

in stature of those whom our hero thus in his mind entitled their predecessors in barbarism.

Nothing can display with greater strength of colouring the dread which the adventurers we have just sent to sea entertained of becoming the property of the merciless Arabs, than the general hilarity which prevailed when they found themselves several leagues from shore, though their vessel was but an open boat, and they had neither sail nor compass. So it is among the vicissitudes of human life! escape from an impending danger produces a momentary forgetfulness of the host of evils with which, even "in the best estate," we are environed.

Until the light of day faded from the sky, and they found themselves encompassed

passed with darkness not relieved by even one twinkling star, our voyagers appeared not fully aware of their forlorn and perilous condition; then the idea forced itself imperiously on every mind, and they recollected how ill their frail bark would be able to contend against a sudden gale of wind, or live in a rough sea—how easily under so gloomy a sky they might be run down by some passing vessel!

Alvarez, who was a priest of the Carthusian order, and had been cast away near the fatal cape of Bogadore, whilst returning from a sacred mission at Macao, felt this a seasonable opportunity for exercising his ministerial duty of exhorting to fortitude and resignation; and so successfully did he enforce his doctrine, that he had soon the soothing

satisfaction of hearing every voice on board joining in his submissive exclamation—"Not *our* will but *thine* be done, oh Father! We are thy servants—do with us what thou wilt."

Protected by Him on whom they thus acknowledged their dependence, the dismal night was passed by them in safety, and they gratefully feasted their eyes with that most glorious of spectacles—the sun rising from the ocean, unimpeded in his luminous course by a single cloud.

Distant sails, too, though merely to be traced on the verge of the horizon, caused every heart to throb with rapturous expectation. One of them rapidly increased upon the sight—they soon perceived from her rigging that she was a brig.

Every



Every exertion of the oar was made use of, in order to come within her observation; they were noticed—they were hailed through a speaking-trumpet—hailed in Portuguese.

Blessed sounds! to what happy changes were they the almost immediate prelude!

In less than half-an-hour the perils and dangers of an open boat were exchanged for the comforts and comparative security of a large merchantman—the mournful apprehension that home and its gentle associations must be seen no more, for a cordial reception, and the warm embraces of friends and countrymen.

The baleful star seemed set, or at least to have expended its violence. Winds favoured, the heavens smiled,

and several days within the time expected, the vessel cast anchor near Belem.

Rodney, by no means the least delighted of the party with whom his fortune had joined him in such harrowing trials, without delay waited on the English *charge d'affaires* at Lisbon; his narrative was told with too much *naïveté* to be discredited, and was too singular and affecting not to rivet attention.

So interested indeed became the amiable hearer, that he humanely received our hero as an inmate in his family during the few days which must elapse previous to the sailing of an English packet, and then generously sent him on board as a cabin passenger.

The voyage to Britannia's lovely  
shores

shores was prosperous and rapid, and in about a fortnight the vessel which contained our friend, Rodney St. Paul, was safely moored in the noble and capacious dock at Kingston-upon-Hull.

## CHAPTER II

He hails his native shore, and presses on,  
Fancying that rugged toil and peril o'er,  
He shall repose him on the myrtle bed  
Of calm domestic peace. How vain the hopes !  
How short the prospect of believing man !

THOMSON.

A PILGRIM who, having steered in safety through the dangers of a journey to the Holy Land, beholds the sacred towers of Palestine's great city, could not feel more genuine rapture than did Rodney on once more setting foot upon his native island.

The busy commercial town of King-  
ston-

ston-upon-Hull had no attractions for him, and there he only continued until the departure of a Scarborough coach, which would carry him nearly to the gates of Napperton Abbey.

The journey, though short of seventeen miles, appeared to occupy an unreasonable space of time; and never during his life did Rodney feel so much disposed to quarrel with the deep-cut roads of our humid climate, pretty generally to be found at the close of the year.

The sun set before four o'clock, and it was past that time considerably when the well-remembered walnut avenue at Napperton was recognized, gladly recognized: through its leafless boughs the outline of the ancient Abbey was faintly distinguishable, but not a light,

either stationary or moving from casement to casement, met his inquiring eye.

It was the hour when, in former happy days, tea used to be served in Mrs. Mary St. Paul's back-parlour; this might account for the darkness of the hall which fronted the road, but could it for the absence of an hospitable blaze from the large windows of the kitchen? Oh no! the house must be unoccupied—the hearts of his good old cousins must have ceased to beat.

“And can I reasonably expect it to be otherwise,” thought Rodney, “when I call to mind their advanced age and increasing infirmities at the time I quitted them?—it must—it must be so!” and a sigh to their revered memory burst from his troubled heart.

“But

“But still,” continued he, mentally, “even these mournful events would not necessarily render the Abbey a deserted pile—some of *my friends* would surely reside there. Oh, I tremble even to conjecture the sad changes which may have taken place during my seven years’ absence.”

There was not time for the present pursuance of these melancholy cogitations—the coach stopped.

With merely nodded adieus to his fellow-travellers, and the usual *douceur* to the coachman, Rodney leaped down, and hurried to the great gate of the Abbey grounds—it was fastened by an immense padlock ; he skipped over the adjoining stile, and with rapid steps and a quick-beating pulse, pursued the  
footpath

footpath leading to the ancient mansion.

It was light enough (for the moon had by this time risen) to shew him that the walk which had formerly been kept remarkably trim and well gravelled, was

“ With nettles skirted and with moss o’ergrown,”\*

and that the bordering hedges had lost all traces of the ingenious old gardener’s shears.

He soon reached the court into which the grand hall and principal entrance of the Abbey opened; the walls were covered with tufts of grass, the gate locked, and every window of the house closely shuttered. He looked up to the chimneys,

• Blair.



chimneys, but not one circling wreath of smoke ascended—desolation seemed to have taken undisturbed possession.

“You are then gone indeed, my kind and venerated cousins!” sighed poor Rodney; “from your dear friendly voices, voices whose tones still appear to vibrate on my sense, no welcome home awaits me.”

An involuntary groan of regret burst from his bosom, and he continued for many minutes leaning over the decayed courtyard wall in silent contemplation.

Marton was only distant two short miles—thither he determined on going immediately.—“There—there,” argued he, “something animated, something affectionate, will surely be found to cheer my drooping spirits, and congratulate me on escaping from exile.”

He

He must unavoidably go past Napperton Church in pursuing the foot-road to his father's; beneath its hallowed roof, in a projecting side aisle of the chancel, reposed the ashes of his ancestors.

This sepulchral chapel (formerly a chauntry for masses for the souls of the deceased St. Pauls) was lighted by a large Gothic window, on which, at the moment he approached, the moon beamed her full and unclouded splendour. He could not resist an impulse to take a near survey of this place of kindred dust. He looked through the diagonal squares of glass—a lofty mural monument of statuary marble met his eye, and he could distinctly read upon it—

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BELOW

BELOW REPOSE,  
IN HOPES OF A JOYFUL RESURRECTION,  
THE MORTAL REMAINS  
OF  
CHRISTOPHER ST. PAUL, Esq.  
OF NAPPERTON ABBEY;  
THE LINEAL DESCENDANT OF A  
FAMILY FROM  
THE TOWN OF ST. PAUL,  
IN NORMANDY,  
WHICH ENTERED ENGLAND WITH  
WILLIAM THE CONQUEROR:  
HE LIVED  
TO THE GREAT AGE OF  
ONE HUNDRED AND THREE YEARS,  
AND DIED,  
IN THE FAITH AND FEAR OF GOD,  
JULY 2, 1798.

---

A little

A little to the right of this inscription appeared a memorial of his departed cousin, Mrs. Mary; and there was yet another "*memento mori*," covering a part of the wall which he remembered when he left the Abbey to have been unoccupied, but it was too much in shade to admit of one letter being deciphered; whom it commemorated he could not therefore discover.

Time for the painful conjectures to which the latter circumstance naturally led the way was not at present allowed, for his melancholy musings were at this moment interrupted by the clapping of the churchyard-gate, and on turning he beheld a man with a pipe in his mouth, drawing near, who from his gait appeared supported by a wooden leg.

Rodney discovered, even from afar,  
his

his old friend and tutor, lieutenant Hatchway, but his heart was too full with what he had recently seen and read to utter even a syllable of recognition.

The honest tar, on the other hand, had not the remotest notion that in the stranger he was looking upon his pet pupil, Rodney St. Paul, which is not at all surprising, when we consider that at the time our hero quitted England he was only a boy of twelve years old, and now presented himself in the form of a well-grown young man of more than nineteen: he wore, however, the dress of a sailor, and that was quite sufficient to ensure him a cordial greeting from the lieutenant, whose bosom yearned with truly professional ardour towards  
every

every thing connected with his darling element.

“ Well, my hearty,” cried he, “ and what wind blows you here so many hours *p. m.* in the month of December? If you be bearing up for night moorings at the old Abbey, let me tell you, you are on the wrong tack—that harbour’s blocked and barred completely, for the kind-hearted old one, who opened his ports so freely to any flag in want of shelter, has been towed off, God knows, and I know to my sorrow, by the surly commodore Death. And there,” continued he, pointing to the church, and at the same time dashing a tear from his weather-beaten cheek, “ there he lies at anchor, and, as the old mariner’s epitaph at Scarborough says, must lie

‘ Till

'Till summoned he  
At length shall be,  
His admiral, Christ, to meet."

"And is it possible you do not know me, Hatchway, dear Hatchway?" interrogated Rodney.

"Not I, by Neptune!" answered the lieutenant, staring on him earnestly; "you are too young to have been one of my messmates—and yet," continued he, "there is sure enough something in the cut of that jib which seems familiar to me."

"Is there nothing in it, lieutenant," inquired young St. Paul, "which calls to your mind the little Rodney of former days?"

"Rodney?—Rodney St. Paul?" returned Hatchway: "no, no, no, it can't be—it can't be! Come, no tricks upon travellers,

travellers, youngster——But yet—yet—just let me take another observation—there is, to be sure and certain, something of the family about you—but——

“No more *buts*, dear Hatchway,” interrupted our hero; “I am indeed your old acquaintance, Rodney St. Paul.”

The information operated upon the lieutenant as music is said to do on persons bit by the tarantula spider, for he cast away his pipe in a moment, hopped briskly forward, seized his quondam pupil by the fist, which he almost shook off, and then fell to leaping and huzza-ing with the antics of a madman.—

“And you are, in sober honest truth, our Rodney?” vociferated he. “Yes, yes, you are—you are—you must be—you  
you



you shall be!" and once more he pursued his strange capering.

"Oh, I'm so overjoyed, so overpowered, that I neither know what I do, nor *where I am*," softening his voice as he spoke the last words, and casting a most melancholy look at the old church. "But I shall not disturb the dear souls; they are beyond the reach of my trumpet.—But come, come, my boy, let us steer away from this sad spot—this is no berth for Jack Hatchway to moisten his pipe with his salt tears in at present; no, no, please the painter, we'll have a figure of Joy at the head, finished off to the life, to-night—ay, and we'll empty her can too: and ha'n't we good reason?" pursued the tar, almost dragging Rodney away—"ha'n't we got a first-rate returned safe from her cruise  
to

to the desolate islands?—ha'n't we got a St. Paul? Yes, yes; I hope a real St. Paul for life, at this here Abbey; for Fanny can't be such a jilt as the knowing ones would make her—she'll never allow anchorage here to any but her own natural consort, when once she finds he's weathered his storm. We shall see the wood blaze in the old chimnies at the Abbey yet, and hear the old wives 'at the good time\*,' singing for luck to the 'squire and madam St. Paul, and 'all the pretty children that round the table go."

Rodney, whose agitation these sentences (though decisive of the speaker's affection) were not much calculated to mitigate, suffered himself, to humour the worthy lieutenant's phraseology, to be

\* Christmas.

be towed along, unresistingly and silently, if we except a few interrogations as to the changes in his beloved family, which had caused such complete desolation in the Abbey and its environs.

The only answers elicited by them were—"Oh, the land shark! Oh, the son of old Strombolo!"

After these and similar exclamations had been uttered, till the speaker was quite tired with the repetition, they were succeeded by—"I can tell you nothing, Rodney, just now, for the life and soul of me! Sympson shall give you the whole tot of it in his own way."

This led to Rodney's expression of unfeigned delight, that the well-remembered "Six-and-eightpence" still was living.

“Living!” repeated lieutenant Hatchway, “yes, and happy; and will be happier than he ever dreamt of when he sees you again; ay, and so will Mrs. Hatchway—there’s another old crony for you to salute. But I won’t say another word till I’ve steered you safe into our snug creek of a harbour—not a syllable, but just an observation which I would make, if even death were capsizeing me, that I wish all your lawyers were like old Sympson, for then we should have nothing dealt out to us but good old-fashioned English justice, which never condemns a prize unlawfully.

“Right would overcome might then—But it’s all the other way on, God knows, in our days.

“Oh, they’re a strange set, Master  
Rodney;

Rodney; and I love 'em just as well, d'ye see, as a cat does to have her feet wet; and that, as the Irishman would tell you, is not 'at all at all.' But you'll believe all this, and more, when you hear Sympson's story."

They now came to a lane, winding along the ruinous walls of the Abbey garden, which was so deeply spread with mud and stiff clay, that it required not a little management to avoid being laid fast by the heels. Here it was impossible to converse much, for the piloting lieutenant, who preceded, could attend to nothing but his duty; and would have considered himself much out of it, if he had uttered any thing beyond admonitory counsels, such as—"Mind your tacks!—Bear to the larboard!—Rocks to the starboard!—Don't run a-

board your pilot, captain!—Make sail there, the squall's a-coming!"

The angle of the perishing wall being passed, a building presented itself, which in Rodney's early days was uninhabited, and had often been pointed out to him as the hospital where the humane nuns of Napperton had, for many a year, practised their "leeches' skill," and dispensed their viands to sick and indigent travellers.

Hatchway now changed the "note of his piping," and "sung out" most lustily—"House, a-hoy! A-board the *Content*, a-hoy! Hang out your lights, there—here's a first-rate just weathering the pier!"

The door of the solitary habitation half-opened; light was altogether useless, for a clearer moonlight sky could  
not

not well be seen. A large dog bounced out, and leaped up to fawn upon his master, casting at the same time a suspicious glance at the stranger, accompanying it by a sort of stifled bark.

“Cerberus!” cried Rodney, for in the animal he discovered another old acquaintance.

Cerberus\* obeyed the summons: the voice he heard, the figure he beheld, were new; but he had sense enough to call in his ablest counsellor, viz. his smell, before he determined the inviter to be friend or foe: the wagging of the sagacious creature's tail proved the evidence thus sought favourable, if not decisive; but the moment he heard him-

c 3

self

\* Behold the faithful dog his master knew.

HOMER.

self addressed—"Cerby! Cerby, my poor fellow!" all doubt vanished, and he flew up to receive the caresses of his quondam playmate and companion with an air of complete acknowledgment.

As they approached the door, the girl who had unlatched it retired inwards, and Rodney heard himself thus announced by her, in a shrill voice, and broad Yorkshire dialect—"Maister's gotten a saylor chap wiv him, but I knawn't wha 'tis, for I nivver seed him afore. Sarby howivver kens him, an' seems desper't fond on him."

If this speech received an answer, it was entirely drowned to Rodney in the louder tones of Hatchway, who continued bawling—"Come along, boy!—come along! Don't stand rubbing and scrubbing



scrubbing there, like a poor devil of a cabinboy at the door of some finical freshwater captain's stateroom; the lass will swab your boots by morning's tide, and I've a pair of true *Rooshas*\* in the locker for you to-night, which ha'n't lost their right Baltic smell."

Rodney was ostensibly engaged in transferring the mud from his stiffly plastered feet to a band of twisted straw in the passage, but in reality far more intent upon the scene which a wide-open door presented in full view. A cheerful fire of "wood piled high," and a burning lamp, rendered every object clearly discernible.

On one side of the chimney, in a high-backed chair of stuffed leather, sat Symp-

C 4

son,

\* Russia leather slippers.

son, altered considerably by the ravages of time, and embrowned, as of old, with Scotch snuff; but, from the intelligent character of his eye, still retaining the faculties of mind in full perfection. Opposite to him was an aged female, whose operations of the wheel had been obviously suspended by the vociferations of the lieutenant: she had turned an inquisitory look towards the entrance, and Rodney delightedly beheld the face of Mary Johnson, his cousin's old house-keeper. Two or three cats lay purring round the hearth, in the centre of which stood a Dutch oven, well stocked with potatoes, roasting for the family supper.

The harmony of this calm domestic picture was completely broken when Hatchway stumped forward, chaunting  
most

most sonorously the verse from an old Scots ballad, which begins—

“ Rise up and mak’ a clean fireside,  
Hang on the muckle pot.”

“ Ay, and ye will too, Mary, cheerfully, right cheerfully,” cried the lieutenant, “ when you find what a noble prize I’ve captured here. Why, Simpson—why, dame—what, ye’re only fair-weather friends then, after all comes to all? And so you’ve never a word then to welcome a poor fellow home with? Well, well, I’ll not be after snivelling, because you’re so dumbfounded, for it only proves that other folks can be as blind buzzards as old Jack Hatchway. So you don’t know him then, hah? Ay, ay, look and stare at him as ye like.”

“We do!—we do know him!” echoed from both voices.

It is however but justice to honest Cerberus to acknowledge that he was an accessory to their discovery; for taking advantage of a temporary opening of the door, he had rushed in, and, during Hatchway’s harangue, had reared up his fore paws against our hero.

“We do know him,” repeated Sympson and Mrs. Hatchway—“he is *our own Rodney!*”

Six-and-eightpence attempted to rise at the moment of his exclamation; Mary *did* so, and found herself a thousand-fold rewarded by the grateful kiss which our young sailor impressed upon her lips.

To congratulations succeeded inquiries and explanations so interesting, that  
although

although they continued until the dawn of day, not a lowering eyelid in the party evinced any thing like an inclination for sleep.

CHAPTER III.  
.....

He can with ease assume all outward forms,  
Seem the most honest, plain, sincere, good man,  
And keep his own designs lock'd close within;  
While with the lynx's beam he penetrates  
The deep reserve of ev'ry other breast.

JEPHSON.

A REPETITION of Rodney's adventures would be truly superfluous; I must, however, to keep up the thread of my story, in as few words as possible relate the occurrences which had taken place in the St. Paul family during the last seven years.

Mrs.

Mrs. Mary's death was followed, in little more than a year, by that of her brother. His funeral was conducted with due attention to the ancient customs of the family; and after it the company were invited to the great hall of the Abbey, in order to hear the will of the deceased.

To the general astonishment of the numerous party, the testament bequeathed "all and every" of the late Mr. St. Paul's "estate and effects (with the exception of five thousand pounds to Mr. William, and a few charitable donations) to Frances Sharkem, spinster," appointing, at the same time, her father guardian and sole executor, and declaring, that "in case she, the said Frances Sharkem, should marry without the consent of her said father, that  
then

then the estate and effects therein devised and bequeathed should become the sole property of the said John Sharkem, esquire, his heirs and assigns for ever."

Appeal against this extraordinary disposition of property there was none, for the will appeared regularly executed—attested by three highly respectable witnesses; and Mr. William St. Paul, though certainly heir-at-law to the deceased, could not claim any part of the estate under deed of settlement or entail.

The crafty Sharkem breathed forth his ever-ready chain of complimentary adjectives at every clause of the important document, and when the recital of it concluded, added—"This is all due, and owing, and to be attributed to, and accounted for by, the love and affection and attachment evinced, shewn, avowed, and



and acknowledged by the dear, good, kind-hearted Rodney St. Paul, for and towards my sweet, pretty, interesting little Fanny. Don't, don't be cast down, worthy, excellent Mister William—rather, Mister Saint Paul, for you are now rightly, clearly, and to all intents and purposes, the top, head, chief, or apex of your ancient house, lineage, and descent. Excuse me, I pray, beg, and beseech, and attribute my want of respect and attention, in my unthinking, careless, not-to-be-defended address, to the violence, severity, and acuteness of my grief, sorrow, and tribulation for our late never-to-be-repaired or made-up loss. Don't, don't be cast down, dear, good Mr. Saint Paul; I shall be an active, vigilant, and faithful guardian for her, who although, as in blood proceeding

ceeding, *my* real and natural daughter, *you* have always regarded with the feelings of a father. Perhaps I shall only be managing, and I hope, pray, and beseech it may prove the case, for your worthy excellent family. Rodney may, and most likely will, return; and oh, what delight and joy will that occasion to poor dear Fanny!"

By the way, he had, at the very moment of these expressions and assertions, private reasons for concluding that all hopes of our hero's reappearance in England were completely at an end, for he understood it to be the general opinion of those who returned with lord M——'s embassy, that he must have accidentally perished in the vicinity of Turon Bay.

Mr. William St. Paul, who was not  
to

to be gulled by these hypocritical representations, merely replied to them by observing, that his worthy old cousin had certainly a right to dispose of his estate and property as he thought fit—  
“ And I *suppose* he exercised it,” added he: “ but, after all, it is assuredly a strange unaccountable will; he must have known the almost-certainty of our poor Rodney’s death. But I submit; though, with *my* family, Mr. Sharkem, the loss of an inheritance like Napper-ton—an inheritance to which, by nearness of relationship, we had great reason to look forward, is certainly a most serious disappointment. But I repeat, I submit; for property, upon being considered in its true light, is not of that importance which the general struggle for it seems to imply. A few short  
years,

years, Mr. Sharkem, as far as you and I are individually concerned, and the possession of Napperton, nay, of all the treasures of the East, will avail us nothing! Can we secure such fugitive things as riches, even with the strongest precautions, to those we now fondly contemplate as our heirs? Oh no! they, like ourselves, may be swept away from the face of the earth, and be no more seen. 'God,' to employ a proverbial expression, 'maketh heirs;' and I cannot suppress an observation, that those who succeed in an irregular way seldom enjoy a *very* protracted inheritance."

Mr. St. Paul did not wait for a reply, but with a mournful farewell look at each surrounding object, quitted the venerable seat of his ancestors for ever.

Sharkem.

Sharkem was certainly a good deal affected by the solemn address just recited, for in it were some home strokes, which told most severely; it did not, however, disqualify him from entering, in due form, upon the immediate discharge of his executorial duties; for Mr. St. Paul had scarcely quitted the house, before he summoned the ancient domestics of the family into the great hall, and demanded possession of the keys of their different departments, and at the same time informed them, that—"All wage, or wages, or other sum or sums of money, which might be due and owing to them, or any of them, from their late dear, excellent, worthy master, should be paid and discharged with all convenient speed; and that from, and immediately after, such payment and discharge

charge before-mentioned, their several and respective services would cease, determine, and be no longer required, previous contract or agreement with the defunct Christopher St. Paul, esquire, notwithstanding."

When the different keys of office were deposited on the hall table, Mr. Sharkem's confidential clerk (Wilson), who had recited the will, ticketed each with a label of parchment, and afterwards fixed the whole of them upon a steel ring.

The weeping household were immediately dismissed, but not before they had been obliged to listen to another address from the longwinded solicitor, setting forth and shewing, to make use of some of his favourite terms, that as a faithful and conscientious guardian, it behaved

believed him to be thus particular, in order that regular and exact inventories might be forthwith made, or drawn out, of all the goods and chattels, which, by the last will and testament of the deceased squire, now vested in his daughter, Frances Sharkem, and of which he must one day, when thereunto lawfully called, be required to surrender a just and true account.

Few guardians, at the commencement of their office, ever exhibited stronger testimony of interest in the affairs of those committed to their care than Sharkem, for no less than a whole week of his *precious* time did he unrepiningly devote to the inspection of old Mr. St. Paul's papers, or consume in making out lists of plate, linen, books, china, and other valuables. So much indeed

deed did he descend to minutiae, that, to borrow an expression of Mrs. Hatchway's, it was reported and believed, he overlooked not a dishcloth in his accurate survey.

The most important of this moveable property, which thus devolved on Fanny Sharkem, for the benefit of *safe custody* was speedily removed to the house of her father, and the Abbey immediately after shut up. The latter circumstance, like every thing else left entirely to conjecture, was differently accounted for; the superstitious part of the neighbourhood, as may be guessed, ascribed it to the activity of *certain nocturnal disturbers*, who never yield possession of an ancient country mansion to any but the rightful heir, without evincing violent opposition. Others more rationally  
thought



thought it merely proved that Sharkem, like *les parvenu ou nouveaux riches* in general, designed to blot out the remembrance of those whom he succeeded, as far as that could be accomplished by levelling their residence with the ground.

“Never,” observed Sympson, who was the principal narrator of these distressing particulars to Rodney, “must I forget the day when we took our last farewell of the dear Abbey. I say *we*, because you must know, Master Rodney, that for the last two years of our excellent friend’s life, I had been entirely detained there; for even after his eyesight would not allow him to distinguish the moves of the backgammon-board, no one could read to him so satisfactorily as myself—no one could mix  
his

his punch or fill his pipe like me; poor Kester Hilton, you must understand, was dead."

"It was indeed a sorrowful day," interrupted Mrs. Hatchway, the tears flowing down her furrowed cheeks at the remembrance; "it was more trying, I do think, than all the funerals."

"Thank Heaven, however," resumed the agitated Sympson, "there was not a dependent attached to our good old friend's establishment who had not saved something to begin the world with. Luckily for Mrs. Johnson, myself, and Hatchway, the considerate old 'squire had, several years before we lost him, provided for the necessities of our old age, by inserting our names in a three-life lease of about ninety acres of land, adjoining the cottage where we now are.

are.—This kind act," continued he, turning to the lieutenant, "I think, Hatchway, first suggested to you the idea of making Mary 'bone of your bone?'"

"Why, it certainly embarked us in one bottom, as the saying is," said the old sailor; "but I'd been trying to clap on the grappling hooks of matrimony before that breeze set in—Hadh't I, Polly?"

It was not in the power of Hatchway's joke to raise a smile on the countenance of poor Rodney, for he was not only depressed by the detail which preceded it, but persuaded he could read something in the countenance of Sympson which augured a reserve of distressing information: and, alas! he was not mistaken, for he had yet to hear of the death of his worthy and

beloved father—an event which occurred within six months after that of his venerable cousin, the old squire, and was, according to received opinion, accelerated by his recent disappointment; for notwithstanding the philosophy which appeared on the face of his address to Sharkem after the funeral, he felt the loss of Napperton very severely, and never afterwards enjoyed either health or spirits: to render the stroke still more heavy, it came upon him at a time when an acquisition of fortune would have been particularly acceptable, for owing to the failure of considerable mercantile speculations in which two of his sons were engaged, he was just then embarrassed by some extensive pecuniary difficulties.

“And my truly excellent mother,”  
asked

asked Rodney, half suffocated with grief, "how did she support all this weight of woe? Alas! I tremble for your answer — Did she survive?"

"She did," replied Sympson; "and, thanks to that kind Power who is 'a father to the fatherless, and a husband to the widow,' is blest with tolerable health, and surrounded by every comfort which can arise from a moderate competency. She resides at Danesdale, in which, perhaps you will recollect, that by marriage-settlement she has a life-interest. Matt is the manager of her little farm; your two younger sisters divide the household cares: your eldest is married to the worthy curate of Napperton, to whom Sharkem, by the way, ought to have given the living, which has lately become vacant.

Charles and George have a commercial concern at Liverpool. William, as you will imagine, lives on the entailed estate at Marton; he is married, and has two children."

"That good Mrs. St. Paul does not forget the friends of her still dear Rodney," interrupted Mrs. Hatchway, "is plain from her occasional calls here, and the many kind presents with which she is perpetually favouring us; the sausages which you partook of at supper were the produce of her farm."

There was yet another being after whom Rodney longed most earnestly and ardently to inquire.

Reader, you know, you feel, the individual here meant—you cry spontaneously—"It was Fanny—the tenderly-beloved Fanny;" and you are right: he  
had

had been informed, as you are aware, of her acquisition of fortune, but he wished likewise to find out how she had acquitted herself in consequence of it—whether, in plain English, she seemed to have forgotten that such a creature as Rodney St. Paul had ever existed. He did not go quite so far in his inquiries, but he said sufficient to prove, beyond a doubt, that the object of his early love still occupied a very eminent situation in his affections.

“ Dear sweet child ! she had no hand in her father’s black doings,” answered Mrs. Hatchway ; “ I do believe she would have been much better pleased if a St. Paul had inherited than herself. She never passes without calling, and many’s the kind office she has done to us, and, indeed, to every one attached

to the old squire. My good man," added she, "is one of her top-favourites, for she never sees him without saying—'Dear Hatchway?' or 'How d'ye do?' or 'Well, I fear, now that you have lost your admiral Rodney, you'll be put on the shelf, lieutenant.' When she says '*admiral Rodney*,' for she means you, sir, she never speaks without the tears trickling down her pretty cheeks; and then she sighs so heavily!—But—but —"

"Why can't you clap your trumpet to your mouth at once, Mary," cried the lieutenant, "and sing out, which must be done sooner or later, that the *Fanny*, first-rate, is put into commission, and daily expected to receive a commanding-officer on board?"

The statement to which this exclamation



mation led set forth, that five months previous to Rodney's return home, old Sharkem had treated Fanny and her mamma with a jaunt to the Dragon at Harrowgate, where they fell in with a noble Scotch lord, whose scanty rent-roll gave him as just a right to king John's epithet of Lackland, *alias, Sans Terre*, as his serpentine figure to that of Esop; but he had rank, let my reader recollect, and as "charity" is said "to hide the multitude of sins," so, according to the old solicitor's notions, did rank conceal a multitude of personal and mental imperfections. To see his darling Fanny, doubly his darling since she had become the indisputable heiress of Napperton Abbey, a countess, was the summit of his ambition—to hear himself called grandpapa by right ho-

nourable masters and right honourable lady Fannies and lady Maries—Oh! the bare anticipation was delightful! Could these things be brought to pass, he soothed himself with the reflection that he could then depart in peace—to bring them about, he strained every nerve.

From the moment the tiny earl of Kilrennie looked at his fair daughter, he marked him for his future son-in-law, and *courted* him most assiduously, unremittingly.

Sharkem had venison, fruit, and game, sent down to Harrowgate from half the parks, gardens, and manors, in Yorkshire, of which he took especial care that his lordship should abundantly partake.

Sharkem had carriages, horses, servants, all ready for the noble earl's accommodation;

commodation; and then he could flatter so sweetly, that even his long-spun speeches could be heard without occasioning the smallest *tedium*.

Mrs. Sharkem, too, who was desperately smitten with the desire of being mother to a peeress, had her artillery of *bon-bons*, which fell rather thickly on every side of "my lord," in the form of complimentary speeches and attentions of all sorts and sizes.

"Lard Kil-rai-ney is soo eesy, soo genteel, soo jane-tle-manely," to adopt her pretty method of drawling out words through her nose: "how chawming-ly he dahn-ces! so troo-ly Scawtch! soo aner-jatic!—Well, I do admire the reel so—there's sahm-thing soo mane-ly in it, so graze-ful; and Mister Share-eum

tells me he plays equally well at beel-hards, and bake-gaymon, and chayse—Oh, he's sare-tin-ly a vay-ry clay-ver main!"

Then she could not sit down to tea without "*my lard*"—she could not go an excursion to Studley, Harewood, or Knaresborough, unless he were of the party, to "poynt out avery abject war-thy at-tane-shun."

Who could stand out against batteries such as these? at any rate, it was not in the nature of the earl of Kilrennie: it is certain he was no more of a genius than he was of an Adonis—his mind was no gem shut up in an unsightly casket—gem and casket were nearly as possible upon a par; but he had sense enough—was, if you please,  
*gourmand*

*gourmand* enough to relish the good things of this world, and had, moreover, no objection to hear himself praised, even for "perfections not his own;" he had, besides, discernment sufficient to see and feel that Miss Sharkem was a beautiful unaffected girl—would do no discredit, though *only an attorney's daughter*, to his coronet, and, above all, that her money and acres would enable him to rekindle the fires in his ancestors' halls in the north of Scotland, for he had, though I have surnamed him Lackland, something, though little more than a ruinous pile of stones, which he denominated a family castle.

His lordship flattered himself—and had he not reason, with his coronet in one hand, and such an encouraging papa and mamma on the other?—that the

motto proper for his courtship would prove—

“Veni—vidi—vici!”

But, alas! we must agree with Addison—

“’Tis not in mortals to command success,”

for the right honourable the earl of Kilrennie, whose title bore date 1414, instead of a blushing acknowledgment of the honour done to her, was doomed to hear the daughter of *nobody knows who* politely but decidedly pronounce, she *never* could be his.

Joy—joy for our friend Rodney!—he felt it—it thrilled through every part of his frame.

“Dear, dear Fanny!” he exclaimed:  
“oh, Mr. Sympson, how you revive  
me!”

me! So she would not be sacrificed to this hideous lord—his title was nothing in her estimation? But go on—perhaps, after all——”

“ Don’t trouble yourself with *perhapses*, Mr. Rodney,” continued Sympson, “ for she perseveringly refused the little nobleman: her father pressed—her mother entreated; the former insisted—the latter commanded; but Fanny remained immovable—on the article of marriage she determined to consult her own feelings.”

“ And she still continues thus minded—still is Fanny Sharkem?” interrogated Rodney.

“ She is certainly still Fanny Sharkem,” resumed Sympson, “ and according to my idea of her, will never consent to be countess of Kilrennie; but  
you

you shall hear all we know, Rodney, if you have patience."

Rodney was silent, and Sympson's narrative again went forward.

"My lord, of course, was astonished beyond measure at the young lady's refusing him, for he had never heard his own opinion, that he was quite an Adonis, contradicted; all the ladies he met with simpered and smiled when he drew near; his reels gilded every face in the different assembly-rooms he frequented with laughter: what could all this mean but admiration? And then his title, his ancient title, bearing date so very far back! and to be refused by a little low-born *country attorney's daughter*, whom he naturally supposed would have been ready to kiss the ground he trode on, when she heard  
of



of the honour he proposed conferring! He felt almost determined to quarrel with his intended papa-in-law; but then my lord called to mind the venison, the grapes, the good things of all sorts and sizes he should lose by it, and he changed his intention into mere loverlike complaints of Miss Sharkem's cruelty.

"The solicitor was so sorry, so angry, so *every thing* that the earl wished, that he determined to renew his attack again and again, and strive to win the lady by perseverance, if she should continue blind to his perfections and high rank.

"From this time, my lord became Fanny's complete shadow; he danced, rode, walked with her, sat next her at table. The world said—'*It must be a match*;' Mr. Sharkem did not contradict it;

it; but, in reality, Fanny remained deaf to her noble lover, and, excepting when she repeated her answer to his original suit, was silent to him.

“ Few young ladies are supposed to be pleased when papa or mamma announces that the time has arrived when they must quit the gay society of Harrowgate, and return to stupid home. Miss Sharkem proved an exception to the general rule, for never did she feel more genuine satisfaction than when she beheld Mrs. Abigail packing up for a removal.

“ My lord placed Miss Sharkem in the carriage, squeezed her hand, ogled, and sighed most affectingly.

“ Fanny bowed very graciously, and even rewarded him with a smile—the first she ever gave him, and, she trusted,  
the

the last she should ever have an opportunity of bestowing in the same quarter: in truth, it was a smile of satisfaction which shot instantaneously, involuntarily, over her countenance, at the idea she was on the point of escaping from her tiresome persecutor.

“ Poor Fanny! her smile was, alas! premature; for papa and my lord had settled it that the latter was to follow them home in about a fortnight, and commence a new siege.

“ He came, and in a coroneted chariot, attended by two powdered lacquies, daubed from head to foot with gold lace, hired, as the generality of the neighbourhood believed, and most likely with Sharkem’s cash, for the express purpose of softening the obdurate Fanny, and rendering his lordship irresistible; but  
this

this gay set-out availed nothing; for lord Kilrennie in a coach-and-six, a chariot-and-four, or on foot, was all the same to Miss Sharkem."

"And does his lordship still persevere?" interrogated Rodney.

"Yes," returned Sympson, "and is actually at Sharkem's at this present moment, and some will have it with brightening hopes. The gossips see in every servant who goes from ——— to York or Hull a messenger to hasten wedding clothes or order bridecake; but I feel inclined to bet any wager that Fanny Sharkem will never become lady Kilrennie, particularly after she is assured that a certain young friend of mine did not perish, as was apprehended, in Turon Bay.—So keep up your spirits, Mr. Rodney."

"By

"By all manner of means," bawled lieutenant Hatchway; "faint heart never won fair lady,' you know—no weather in the world was ever so squally, but a calm followed in due time;" with a thousand other of his quaint sentences of encouragement, and wound up all by two lines from his favourite ballad of "*Black-ey'd Susan*:"—

"Change as ye list, ye winds, her heart shall be  
The faithful compass that still turns to thee."

Rodney sighed, but said little in return; and when the day began to dawn, he shook hands with his friends, and set forward towards the residence of his mother, which lay at no more than two miles distance from Napperton Abbey: there he felt it his duty to pay an early visit—there he should probably hear  
more

more detailed accounts of the Sharkem family—there be assisted with advice as to the best method of announcing his return in safety to the yet tenderly-beloved Fanny.

**CHAP-**

CHAPTER IV.  
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Ah, happy hills ! ah, pleasing shade !
Where once my careless childhood stray'd
A stranger yet to pain—
I feel the gales that from ye blow
A momentary bliss bestow,
As waving fresh their gladsome wing,
My weary soul they seem to sooth,
And, redolent of joy and youth,
To breathe a second spring.

GRAY.

DANESDALE, to which Rodney was journeying, was associated in his mind with many pleasing and early recollections. It was an estate which his grandfather had purchased when Yorkshire

shire wold-land had no very high character with the agriculturist. There almost the first crop of that elegant grass, the cinquefoil, flourished in the North of England—there Scotch, and other firs and forest trees, had been planted to a considerable extent.*

Our hero could recollect almost every tree on the farm, for he had been there almost constantly till he went to Napperton Abbey at four years of age, and during several years of subsequent residence with his old cousin he had been indulged in frequent excursions thither; it had been named by his father's
eldest

* The place here described really exists; and belonged to the author's grandfather, and by purchase is now vested in a family of the name of Broadley: several of the characters in this chapter are likewise drawings from nature.

eldest sister, from certain tumuli on the estate, where a great number of Danes had been interred*, after one of those dreadful battles so common during the Heptarchy, when the northern horde made frequent descents upon this island.

Rodney walked quickly, for the morning was delightful, though December, and the roads excellent, from a severe frost, and he consequently soon arrived at the summit of a hill half-way between Napperton and his mother's, which was crowned with a clump of trees, planted by his grandfather's own hand. Here he could not forbear pausing—here he could not forbear remarking how much the firs were increased since

* The author's aunt actually named the place here introduced, which before her time had borne the brumal "freezing epithet of "Cold Harbour."

since last he saw them — “ And the hand,” thought he, “ which inserted them in the soil is mouldering in the dust—the eye which would have most delighted in their progress is shut in darkness.”

A tear dropped to the shortness and uncertainty of human life, the vanity of human projects; but I trust it appeared not in the sight of Heaven as a murmur, for it was immediately followed by an acknowledgment—“ All is for the best. Were man assured,” added he, “ that he should not live till he saw his undertakings flourish, how few would build, would plant, would speculate! the world would soon become a desert.”

The remainder of his walk was through the wildest wold scenery that
can .

can possibly be conceived; long ranges of hills, whose brown sides were speckled with flocks of clambering sheep, and deep-winding vallies, where occasionally a turf hut, or a solitary shepherd, presented themselves, stretched out on every side.

Rodney, however, was not in a mood to pay much attention to objects like these—his eye was only anxious to behold the blue smoke rising from the dale “in which his widow’d mother dwelt;” this eagerly-desired object was soon before him, for, from the brow of the very next eminence, he looked down full upon the dear abode;

“ Deep in the windings of a woody vale,
By solitude and deep-surrounding shades
— — — conceal’d *,”

• Thomson.

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it

it reared its humble head. Spot cannot well be conceived, where the flower might more securely

“Blush unseen,
And waste its sweetness on the desert air.”

The habitation was small, for it had originally been nothing more than a very inferior farmstead, to which a couple of moderate-sized apartments were added at the time when Rodney's grandfather made it his home. By the hands of the same old gentleman, every tree in a pretty extensive wood of pines, to the north and east, was planted.

The house fronted upon a small field, of green turf, with a garden to the right, and a range of buildings necessary for the farm on the left. The road
which

which Rodney pursued led down nearly in a line with the latter.

"There," soliloquized he, leaning on a gate at the top of the hill, "there is assembled a group of beings, the nearest and dearest to me; they are now preparing to enter on their daily occupations, unconscious of the increase which their domestic circle is about to receive, little thinking that their lamented Rodney is so near."

As he spake, several females were clearly discernible, passing and repassing, within the upper windows of their retired dwelling.

With the sight originated an idea that his abrupt appearance might be productive of bad, if not fatal, consequences to his affectionate mother, who no doubt

(for from Sympson he heard that none of his various letters from Cochin-China had reached their intended destination), felt a clear conviction, that in this world her eyes were never more to rest upon her darling Rodney.

The smoking chimney of a cottage attached to the farming offices below pointed out a place whence he might cautiously open a communication with the principal habitation of the dale, without coming upon its inmates unawares.

Towards it he bent his steps, until they were momentarily arrested by a voice, proceeding therefrom, chaunting, in shrill notes, an ancient ballad, "The Lord of Lorn," to which he had, in childhood, frequently listened with delight,

light, from the lips of his nurse, Betty Dry, a servant in his grandfather's family.

"Perhaps," thought he, "it may be Betty herself: if so, what better mode of communication can I hit upon with my beloved relatives than through her agency? She is a clever though unpolished creature, and will manage everything for me judiciously."

He walked instantly to the door of the cottage, and, much to his satisfaction, perceived, at the first look, that the singer was in reality the person he suspected: she was twirling a large wool-wheel, and chaunting her rude lay as she went, "for want of thought."

"Lo-ard a marcy hoo you flay* a body!" exclaimed she, turning sudden-

E 3

ly

* Frighten,

ly round at the sound of Rodney's footsteps.

"What, Betty, are you afraid of me?" interrogated our hero; "I thought you would have rejoiced to see me safe and sound."

"Why, bairn*,” replied Betty, "I never seed you in all my born days, at I knaws on; but you sailor lads are sike comical chaps, thay's nae knawing what to mak o' ye."

"So you've entirely forgotten him you once nursed—him to whom you have told many a long story, and so often sung 'The Lord of Lorn,' and 'The Knight in Green,' even your awn bonnie lahtel* Rodney?"

"Rodney!"

* Child.

† *Little* is pronounced *lahtel* in many parts of Yorkshire.

"Rodney!" repeated Betty; "I never nossed but 'yan* o' th' neame, an' he, poor fellow, gat drowneded over seas."

Rodney soon convinced Betty to the contrary; and she, as unreluctantly as Mrs. Hatchway had done in a former instance, made haste to set by her wheel, and invited him to walk into her parlour, observing—"There's a bit o' fire there, and naebody in it but my mother, poor auld thing, and she's grown despart silly. She's seer not to ken ye, for at times she hardly knaws Jew-arge† and me."

The parlour, of which she immediately opened the door, was a room containing two bedsteads of black oak, set in panels, with ponderous poles of the

E 4

same

* One.

† George.

same material, and most heavy and elaborate workmanship, not very dissimilar to that exhibited at Leicester, where Richard the Third is said to have spent the night previous to the celebrated battle which lost him a crown.

Near to the fireplace, on a very low stool, sat an aged matron, covered with a faded scarlet cloak and black silk hood, and knitting a brown worsted stocking; she did not turn round, or exhibit any proof of noticing their approach.

“Poor old nurse!” sighed Rodney, for in her he recognized a woman * who had been known in the family by that title from his earliest infancy, and long before.

“Mother!—mother!” shouted Betty,
in

* Anne Thomson was the name of the woman here introduced.

in a loud key, for, according to her language, the old dame was 'despart hard of hearing*,' "mother! here's maister Rodney, him 'at you used to mak sae mickle to dea aboot when he was a bairn, comed to ax ye hoo ye dea†."

"Rodney! Rodney!" repeated the old woman, "he was a bonnie bairn, Betty, God luv him! but he's de-ad; ye knaw, lang sin," and she held on knitting.

"She's varry daft‡, ye see," resumed Betty, apologizing for her superannuated mother's inattention to him.

"Don't disturb her, for God's sake!" said Rodney, sighing at the idea of what poor human nature may be reduced to,

E 5

and

* Very deaf.

† Do.

‡ Stupid. BAILEY.

and calling to mind, at the same time, Dr. Samuel Johnson's memorable line—

* In life's last scenes what prodigies surprise !”

He then proceeded to explain what his filial fears had suggested, as to the effects which might ensue from suddenly presenting himself at his mother's, and requested her opinion as to the best method of introducing himself there.

“ Lord luv ye for being sae thought-ful aboot poor madam !” cried Betty : “ but you were awl’as * a good bairn, Maister Rodney, an’ I can see you’re yan still. Why, what do you think if I were just to step up to th’ house, an’ ax for Maister Matty ; my auld man’s
oft

* Always.

oft wanting him about sheep and sike, so that misses 'il never think *owt** about his coming on here a bit."

"The best plan in the world," replied Rodney; "thank you—thank you most heartily for the hint."

Betty opened the door, in order to perform her errand, but had not occasion to cross her own threshold, for Mr. Matthew St. Paul was, at the very moment, approaching the cottage on his pony.

"You're the varry man we're a-wanting, sur!" exclaimed Betty; "pra' ye leet†, for we've gotten sike a stranger i' th' parlour, as ye lahtel think on."

Matthew alighted, and was most agreeably surprised to find the stranger thus announced a no less important per-

E 6

sonage

* Aught, any thing.

† Alight.

sonage than the often-deplored companion of his youthful sports—his dear brother Rodney.

“Your caution, beloved Rodney,” said he, after half-an-hour had been consumed in mutual explanation, “was truly considerate, for I do think your unexpected appearance would have quite overwhelmed our excellent mother, who though, thank God! in pretty good general health, has become, by the pressure of domestic trials, very nervous. Ellen and Betsey will know the best how to break your return to her, so to them I shall immediately return,” and away he ran to the house.

In a very few minutes he returned, accompanied by his sisters, who were ready to devour Rodney with their caresses and congratulations.

With

With them he adjourned very soon to his mother's, and it was agreed the old lady should be prepared for his appearance, by a report that a young sailor had been at Betty Dry's, who brought word that Rodney still survived.

Delightful were the sensations of the hero of this tale, when he felt himself once more safely sheltered by a paternal roof; but they were more than the most eloquent pen can delineate, and must be felt to be understood, when he heard the well-remembered voice of his revered mother, inquiring, from the top of the staircase, the reason why her daughters had hurried so precipitately to Betty's cottage?—"Nurse is not worse than common, I hope?" said she.

"No, mamma," replied Ellen, the
eldest

eldest of the young ladies ; “ but Betty has had a person there, who knew our poor Rodney abroad, and says that _____”

“ Does he say he lives ? ” interrogated the anxious mother, descending quickly as she spake. “ I must see the person, girls, without delay.”

She advanced into the parlour—her eyes encountered those of the stranger. What eye can scrutinize like that of a mother? At one glance Mrs. St. Paul knew her child—her long-lost child! The next moment beheld her sunk, nearly lifeless, in his arms. Soon she revived, to hear and see her maternal conclusions verified beyond the possibility of doubt.

Happy moment!—hour that can rarely be equalled in felicity among the children

children of men! A mother—who so full of feeling?—who so uniformly, genuinely kind, so *really* affectionate?—a mother recovers her son as from the grave!—she feels those pulses throb she feared were still for ever!—those eyes are turned, beaming with filial tenderness upon her, which she apprehended were closed in death!

CHAP.

CHAPTER V.

Mute and uncertain, and amazed,

As on a vision Bertram gaz'd.

WALTER SCOTT.

SEVERAL days elapsed before Rodney and his family agreed upon the best method of informing Fanny Sharkem that her youthful favourite had once more reached his native island.

The general opinion was, the sweet girl would rejoice at the news; and they, at the same time, all agreed her father would experience a quite contrary sensation—that he would regard our hero

as

as the decided interrupter of his plans for Fanny's elevation to the peerage, and consequently set his face determinately against him.

How reach Miss Sharkem's ear? appeared the important consideration. This must not be attempted through papa; letters were liable to be intercepted—and, if it were at all suspected from what quarter they came, *would* be intercepted. A personal interview and explanation were therefore deemed most advisable.

The place of Sharkem's residence was only a few miles from Danesdale, and towards it our hero proceeded; his plan was, to call at Sharkem's, inquire for Fanny's maid, and by her convey an account of his arrival from abroad to her mistress.

The

The increase of the old solicitor's wealth, since Rodney's departure from England, was clearly manifested by the altered aspect of his dwelling, which had swelled, from a moderate-sized family house, into quite an elegant mansion, by the addition of two large wings; the whole front was uniformly stuccoed, in imitation of Portland stone; what had, seven or eight years before, been a mere grass-plat, divided by a narrow gravel-walk to the principal entrance, was now centered by a crescent-like shrubbery, and fenced from the road by high iron paling, with an admission-gate at each angle.

Rodney felt quite panic-struck at the sight of such a splendid place, and scarcely would have had resolution to approach it, but for the assurance of a woman

man casually passing, who told him decidedly, that lawyer Sharkem lived there.

At the very moment when he opened one gate, a gay equipage drove out at the other, and he could distinguish, through the trees, a youthful female form within it, to whom his fancy gave the features of his dear Fanny.

“Perhaps,” supposed he, “her companion may be the hideous lord Kilrennie. Perhaps his persevering assiduities have at last persuaded her to become his.”

So argued fear—hope told a more flattering tale, and said, that though time might have worn out the traces of little Rodney, yet Fanny Sharkem was not surely of a nature to sacrifice herself to a creature

creature such as the earl had been represented to him.

Our hero's heart revived; he determined to attempt seeing her, or somehow or other acquainting her with his return—his return with affections all her own.—“ She *cannot* have forgotten her Rodney!” he sighed, and went forward to the centre entrance of the house.

A housemaid who observed his motions, and had no objection to regale her eyes with a nearer survey of our well-looking friend, Rodney St. Paul, beckoned him to an open window, and kindly informed him, that—“ None but *quality* went up the portico steps,” and that “ if he had any business with the clerks or the servants, he must go to one of the side doors.”

He

He thanked her for this instruction, and was upon the point of inquiring for Miss Sharkem's *own woman*, when the girl turned suddenly from him, and disappeared, possibly called away on business—*probably* descended to the servants'-hall, in hopes of there displaying her beauty more advantageously to the handsome sailor.

Two entrances presented themselves in the wing of the building nearest Rodney; towards the first of them, which stood open, he walked, and found it conducted to a small vestibule, surrounded by the doors of various apartments. He knocked at one of them, and was immediately answered—"Come in!"

Rodney half opened the door, and
civilly

civily inquired if he could be directed where to find Miss Sharkem's maid?

"It is one of the most strange, odd, and unaccountable things that can be thought, conceived, or imagined," cried a voice, very different from the first speaker, and which Rodney instantly knew to be Sharkem's, "that after the public notice in writing duly set forth on the outer door, any person or persons should intrude here, to the great and manifest let, hindrance, or impediment of my private business, with any message for the servants'-hall."

Rodney apologized for his blunder; and was retreating, as he did not feel any particular relish for an interview with the solicitor at the present: but he was not suffered to escape so easily; there

there was something in the tones of his voice which singularly affected Mr. Sharkem, and gave an unconquerable longing to behold the person from whom they issued.

"Throw the door open, Wilson," said the lawyer; and he was obeyed so promptly, that the figure of Rodney stood distinctly revealed.

Family voices are as common as family faces, perhaps more so; according to the author's observations—in both Rodney was a complete St. Paul.

Sharkem saw it—felt it. The sailor's dress, too, was not without effect; it convinced him he was actually looking upon Rodney, the quondam favourite of the old squire of Napperton.

With all Sharkem's self-command, he could not avoid starting and sinking momentarily

momentarily back in the Bath chair where he sat, wrapped round with a flannel dressing-gown. Scott, I think, somewhere says—

“No spectre can the charnel send,
So dreadful as an injur'd friend.”

Had Sharkem injured Rodney, that *he* should feel thus strangely affected?

Reader, if you ask this question, I can only say, in answer to it, you must wait patiently my time of development. You may surmise as you please—indulge in the wide labyrinth of conjecture; at present I shall only say, that from whatever cause his start originated, he soon displayed not one outward and visible sign of confusion, and at first seemed inclined not to reveal his recognition of poor Rodney, for he began
with

saying, though without looking at the object addressed—"You inquire after, or asked for, Miss Sharnaid, I think—that is to say, if not deceived or mistaken, young man, and what, pray, may be your business with the said inquired-on?"

He answered not a word; in the face, he thought the question important, and then he did not, by any means, feel inclined to reply ingenu-

ously. He turned upon him an interrogatory glance, and then, as if struck by some sudden impression (in fact, in this short space of time, his mind had suggested advantages of an immediate acknowledgment

of Rodney, which did not at first strike him), exclaimed—"Why, I surely and decidedly must have looked upon, seen, or contemplated that face or physiognomy before?"

Rodney still remained dumb.

Not so the solicitor; he proceeded with—"Those lines of countenance, *alias* features, are, must be, decidedly, assuredly, familiar to me. Is it possible?—can it be, that you are Mr. Rodney St. Paul, for whom we have for so long a period wept, deplored, and sorrowed, almost, as good worthy Dr. S—— says, 'like men without hope?'"

Our hero merely bowed assent.

"And," continued Sharkem, "not to announce, declare, and present yourself
self

self to such an old tried friend as me! Wilson, wheel me directly into my *own office*; there, my dear, excellent Mr. Rodney, I may enjoy your conversation at leisure. You see what application, and attention, and fagging at business does!" continued he, as he was travelling from his head-clerk's office to his *sanctum sanctorum*. "We pay very, very heavy fines, pains, and penalties, for light and trifling rewards: but I rest easy, satisfied, and content; I've done the best for my dear family, according to my poor, mean, insignificant talents. Yes, yes, I've truly right and reason to be thankful."

The room in which Rodney soon found himself alone with Mr. Sharkem seemed adapted, in every possible way,

for privacy; double doors, lined with green baize, completely defied the quickest-eared listener—whilst windows of ground glass excluded the most piercing eye.

“My good young friend,” said the lawyer, the moment they were *tête-à-tête*, “you cannot think, suppose, or imagine, how pleased, gratified, and delighted I am to see you. Oh, how enraptured, overjoyed, and overpowered would the truly excellent inestimable old squire have been to have witnessed and beheld this moment! I wish to Heaven he had!”

A something rose in his throat, which rendered the last words not quite audible; but he soon recovered a clear articulation, and went on.—“*Good, I*
may

may well and truly designate, and call, and describe the venerable worthy; for you doubtless know how *good* he has been to my sweet child, Fanny. Oh, I wish you had returned but twelve calendar months earlier than the present date! But it cannot be helped, or altered, or avoided: Providence ordereth all things and circumstances for the wisest and best. We are poor, blind, ignorant creatures; never, therefore, never mind, Rodney, dear Rodney: I've some interest at the high court of admiralty, boy, and any thing, every thing, in my poor limited way, must, ought, and shall be yours. We'll push you forward, I'll warrant you, till you're made post; and then, as men of your profession say and observe, 'it's all plane-sail-

ing, till you 'hoist an admiral's flag.' Your good departed old cousin prophesied, you know and remember, that you would live to be an admiral; and I shall glory and delight in being the instrument and means of fulfilling and bringing it to pass.

"Dear Rodney," repeated he, as if it were the burden of his song, "you can't think, conceive, or imagine, how pleased, gratified, and delighted I am to see you. But where have you been? What have you been about all this time? Why did not you write to us?" And then, without waiting for an answer, he ran on, saying—"How my inestimable wife will feel exhilarated by your return! How happy, too, my sweet little Fanny *will* be to shake hands

hands with her former playfellow—to talk respecting, and converse upon, and laugh over, all your juvenile romps and gambols heretofore had, done, and acted at the ancient abbey, or mansion of Napperton! They were joyful days, Rodney, dear Rodney. How happy, likewise, it will make Miss Sharkem, to introduce you to the notice and acquaintance of her——namely, of the right honourable the earl of Kilrennie, viscount this and baron that—I can't attempt or undertake to name or declare half his style or titles, without the fear of misnomers before mine eyes. You must know, my dear young friend—you see I treat you just and identically as one of ourselves—you must know and understand, that my said daughter

is to marry the right honourable lord before-mentioned; and a most excellent, exemplary man—nobleman I ought more accurately to have said, he is. Lucky little rogue, ha, Rodney! this dear sweet little Fanny of ours. Who could have guessed, thought, or imagined, or conjectured, that she would have become a countess? How your worthy old cousin would have gloried! Oh, he was an excellent creature!”

Reader, you feel exhausted, I doubt not, by this prolixity; consider then, what must have been poor young St. Paul's sensations, who could scarcely have suffered more under the hand of inquisitors; he actually sunk under it—sunk into a chair.

It was time, I suppose Sharkem
thought,

thought, for a lenient, which he intended to administer, by saying—"Dear me! whilst I discourse, I forget and overlook that you would, and may, most probably wish and desire to see our dear Fanny, or Mrs. Sharkem, or peradventure both, ha, Rodney?"

"Certainly—by all means!" answered Rodney, whose heart bounded at the bare idea; and, for the moment, he forgot the carriage he had seen drive off, and the lady he imagined to be in it.

A bell was pulled—Mrs. and Miss Sharkem were inquired for. Alas! they were out; they had taken an airing in the earl's chariot.

"How *mal-à-propos*—how unfortunate!" observed the solicitor. "But don't take it to heart, Rodney—to-mor-

row you may be more in luck—to-morrow you shall be received and acknowledged. We dine at five: but come early—let us have a day of you; there is not a being on earth, created or existing, for whom we *all* have a higher regard and affection. What a pity—ten thousand thousand pities, you ever went to sea! If you had not, you might now perhaps have been——But it is no matter grieving—all's for the best. But let me order in sandwiches, wine, porter, for you. Any thing my poor house, larder, or cellar, afford, is, ought indeed, dear Rodney, to be at your service."

Clients were very opportunely brought from Wilson's office to that of his master at this moment. Rodney most cheerfully

cheerfully made way for them, and retreated under a heavy volley of—"Remember to-morrow—and come early, they'll have so many things to ask and inquire after; women, you know, are proverbially curious. Good-bye, Rodney, dear Rodney!"

Poor Rodney had nearly a sleepless night; but, notwithstanding, he contrived to knock at Sharkem's door several hours previous to the time appointed for dinner, being determined to have time sufficient for explanation. His knock was readily answered, but no company *could* be admitted that day, for Mr. Sharkem had been suddenly seized in the night with gout at the stomach, and was ordered to be kept quite still.

The next day, and the next, and the next, furnished answers somewhat similar; Mr. Sharkem was no better—the ladies were in constant attendance on him.

On the fifth morning, so much to the astonishment of our hero that he could at first scarcely credit what he heard, it was reported to him, that all the Sharkem family had set forward to Bath, the waters there being recommended to the old gentleman by all his physicians, as the only thing which could possibly renovate his constitution.

Many hours had not elapsed after the news of this unexpected movement had reached Rodney, before a note, to the following import, reached him at his mother's:—

“ Miss

“ Miss Sharkem feels extremely hurt that she cannot have the honour of renewing her acquaintance with Mr. Rodney St. Paul, her dear father’s illness conspiring with *other important reasons* to prevent it.”

Was the production *really* from Fanny’s pen? became the general inquiry in our hero’s family. It cannot—it is not! Fanny could not write so coolly to one for whom she had ever professed the warmest of affections.

The characters did certainly resemble those of Miss Sharkem, when she had formerly corresponded with her little sailor. But what of that? suggested every

every heart; Sharkem has people who can do any thing—the letter is no more to be depended upon as genuine, than the solicitor's report that his daughter is to marry lord Kilrennie.

Finally, it was settled and agreed, in solemn conclave at Mrs. St. Paul's, that Rodney must endeavour to gain the ear of his Fanny, and alone be convinced, from her own lips, that she had forgotten the youthful

Councils that they two had shar'd,
The mutual vows, the hours that they had spent,
When they had chid the hasty-footed time
For parting them.

SHAKESPEARE.

In short, Rodney must, and that without delay, go to Bath—must, if possible,

possible, prevent Fanny from being sacrificed to a man like the earl, for whom not a living soul believed she had the smallest atom of regard.

CHAP.

CHAPTER VI.
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His mountain back might well be said,  
To measure height against his head;  
And lift itself above;  
Yet spite of all that nature did,  
To make his uncouth form forbid,  
This creature dar'd to love.

PARNELL.

THE Sharkems did not precede our friend Rodney, in reaching the delightful city of Bath, more than eight days. It was not his intention to interrupt their domestic arrangements before they felt themselves quite at home—indeed, not to interrupt them at all by calling, but

but to depend entirely upon circumstances for introducing himself, and coming to an éclaircissement with his beloved Fanny. He secured a lodging in the old-fashioned part of the town, and from thence determined to reconnoitre the proceedings of his northern neighbours.

For several days he saw nothing of them; this he attributed to the extreme dampness of the weather, or perhaps to the increased illness of papa, after so long a journey, with the gout flying about him, like a bird undetermined where to build its nest.

The second conjecture was the right one; for the old solicitor had suffered so considerably from his hasty travelling, that although he was particularly anxious to have his lovely daughter exhibited

hibited to the fashionables of Bath as the forthcoming countess of Kilrennie, he could not possibly dispense with her attendance in his sick chamber for a fortnight after he became an inhabitant of Laura-place; at the termination of that period, the intended victim of parental ambition, with extreme reluctance, stepped into my lord Kilrennie's chariot, to take her first drive through the streets of Bath.

How different were the sensations of this interesting girl and her father at this moment! He exultingly beheld her, from his window, handed to the coronnetted carriage by her noble admirer; she trembled like a person proceeding on some very painful errand, and, instead of courting attention, shrunk back as far as possible from the gaze of curiosity.

sity. These feelings would have been completely reversed, could either party have foreseen the events to which this important airing was to lead.

Rodney, most fortunately, on the morning when poor Fanny was thus unwillingly sent forth in state, had turned his steps towards the fashionable promenade of Milsom-street: the weather was tolerable—the concourse of dashing equipages immense; he gazed anxiously into each as it rolled slowly along, but not a face did his eyes rest upon, which at all reminded him of the fair object he was seeking. He began to torture himself with a thousand lover-like conjectures: instead of the old gentleman, his beautiful daughter must, alas! be ill; perhaps the family had, for some reason yet to be discovered, quitted

quitted Bath; worse than all, probably worn out by the importunities of her father, Fanny might have consented to marry my lord, and was confined at home with preparations for her approaching nuptials.

He almost despaired: but courage, dear Rodney! relief to thy anxiety is at hand. In the very moment when his spirits were at the lowest ebb, a chariot-and-four drove rapidly past him, the horses of which seemed to have got more in them than their pigmy driver had strength to manage. A female was within, in dreadful agitation.

Our hero followed with alacrity; he anticipated some dreadful accident.

The horses kept a straight forward course through the next street; but, at the angle of it, they started, and bringing

ing the carriage in contact with a high curb stone, it was overturned instantly, and almost dashed to pieces; the horses broke loose and galloped away, kicking and plunging most tremendously.

From the little deformed object on the box, and the coronet, Rodney had a fearful apprehension that Fanny Shar-kem might prove the lady thus terribly exposed to destruction. Any human being in such circumstances would, I am sure, have received his ready assistance—how much more, when he suspected it to be the creature he most loved!

In a moment the unfortunate lady was snatched from the fragments of her vehicle—in the next she was conveyed into the nearest shop, and, without waiting for the ceremony of invitation  
from

There is never depended upon the  
will of an interior apartment. Harts-  
horn and water, wheels, and every  
other machine which humanity could  
invent were offered with the greatest  
promptitude.

Hornby smiled with rapture the re-  
viving glow—the opening eye, for he  
saw that the being whom he had held  
in his arms—whose life he had probably  
saved—was indeed her on whom all his  
future earthly happiness depended.—  
“Fanny—oh my beloved Fanny!”  
These involuntarily from his lips whilst  
he hung over her, bathing her transpa-  
rent temples, as she seemed hovering  
between life and death.

The sounds of his voice alone were  
wonderful in operation, for she almost  
immediately looked up, fixed her blue  
eyes



eyes upon the speaker, and sighed; at the same time interrogating—"Where am I? Who are you, sir?"

"You are safe—you are safe!" exultingly cried Rodney; "the happy mortal who has assisted you is one whom I hope seven years of absence has not erased from your memory."

"Are you Rodney—Rodney St. Paul?" asked Miss Sharkem; and before he could answer, she added, in tremulous accents, "there is something about you which tells me you must be so."

"I am—I am, indeed!" answered Rodney; "and you have not then lost the remembrance of me? But, alas! alas! I fear you have forgotten me in any other light than that of an ordinary acquaintance! Your note about a fortnight

night ago speaks to me, alas! too plainly on this point."

"Note!" repeated Fanny: "what mean you, Rodney? Till this moment, I solemnly avow I was unconscious of your present existence."

The lady of the shop, mademoiselle Friponner, who was pretty conversant with human nature, perceiving that her hartshorn and water were now no longer necessary, any more than her personal attendance, very judiciously withdrew, without appearing anxious to probe too deep into the secrets of her accidental guests.

She had indeed got an ample "recompence of reward," in having a young lady brought into her *magazine des modes*, from a noble lord's overturned carriage; and then, that in her deliverer  
she

she had found a quondam lover! Oh! the tale was deliciously romantic—quite calculated to fill her shop with visitors for at least a week to come, who would, of course, be desirous to know all particulars, and in return surely some of them must become purchasers of her fashionable articles *à-la-mode de Paris*.

An explanation followed mademoiselle's retreat, which proved decidedly that Fanny had been kept in utter ignorance of Rodney's interview with her father—that she had neither written nor sanctioned the note to him—and that she neither was nor would be engaged to marry the earl of Kilrennie: in short, she blushing confessed that she had been so long accustomed to regard Rodney St. Paul as possessed of the princi-

pal place in her affections, that she could not divest herself of the idea.

Mademoiselle considerably allowed half-an-hour to be consumed by this *tête-à-tête*, without informing Miss Sharkem that one of the attendants on her unfortunate equipage was in waiting with a sedan-chair to convey her home. I say "considerately," because surely in less than that lapse of time no lady whatever could have recovered from the most ordinary fright, much less such an escape as has just been recorded.

Rodney very humanely replied to mademoiselle's information, that Miss Sharkem could not possibly be removed yet.

"I certainly am still very nervous,"  
said

said the young lady; "and if the man has not sent an account of my accident to Laura-place, I should think it would be best for me to remain here a little longer."

No communication had been made to papa and mamma; the chairmen therefore were ordered to wait.

For the first time since her overthrow, the noble little Jehu, who would have the honour of driving "her chariot for one day," occurred to her mind.

Allow not this tardy recollection of the right honourable gentleman to be ascribed to a lack of humanity on the part of the sweet Fanny—her gentle bosom, reader, glowed, I can safely assure you, with an universal benevolence; attribute it rather to certain peculiar circumstances in her present situ-

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ation,

ation, which temporarily banished from her remembrance the existence of such a being as my lord Kilrennie.

She was pleased to hear that he had been conveyed into an adjoining house, and was considered to have been *more afraid than hurt*; the coachman and lacquey too had likewise escaped from their perilous adventure with some trifling bruises.

Though Miss Sharkem seemed at the first to revive very promisingly, yet she remained full two hours under mademoiselle Fripponer's roof before she ventured on announcing that her chair might be brought into the shop; and when she was led to it by our hero, she leaned so languidly on his supporting arm, as to excite "a thousand pities," from the tender-hearted young milliners

ners in the shop, "that she had not remained with them a short time longer—A little more hartshorn and water, another hour, would have wrought wonders," was the universal declaration of the feeling Misses.

"Day would av do noting—noting at all!" exclaimed mademoiselle, with a mysterious shrug of the shoulders; "it be *l'affaire du cœur—l'affaire du cœur!*—*ah, ciel!* hartshorn an' water, indeet!"

The countenance and manner of the discerning Frenchwoman, more than her words, convinced the young ladies of the needle that she had picked up some highly interesting particulars during her attendance on her recently-departed guests.

With one accord they turned an in-

quitting glance upon her. She understood them, and replied—dear good soul! it was not at all her way to keep any human creature a moment unnecessarily in suspense, by repeating, *verbatim et literatim*, every conjecture she had formed—every thing she had ingeniously found out respecting Fanny and Rodney.

“ Dear me, how very romantic !”—  
“ Well, ’tis quite pretty enough for a novel; I wish Mrs. M——e or Mrs. S——t, or Mrs. Anybody, would put it in a book !”—“ Oh, I long to know how it will end !” and a variety of exclamations of similar import, were the chorusses after every pause in mademoiselle’s “ romance of real life.”

But I digress improperly by thus detailing the chit-chat of a milliner’s shop,  
which



which will be so easily and generally guessed, whilst my readers are anxiously expecting farther details of what passed between Miss Sharkem and her happy favourite Rodney, previous to the dissolution of their *tête-à-tête*.

Reader, mark me, it would be the highest of high treasons in the court of Cupid, for me to indulge you with *all* the conversation; I will, however, venture to tell you, that mutual vows of unchangeable attachment were given and received, and that Fanny enraptured her attached Rodney by announcing that he might meet with her again at the dress-ball on the following evening, which was the time fixed upon by Mrs. Sharkem for her daughter's *entrée* on the *beau monde* of Bath.

The slumbers which closed the eyes

G 4

of

of our young lovers on the night succeeding their unexpected rencounter were productive of dreams so delightful, that they awoke from them in the highest spirits—spirits which were not even damped by the recollection that Fanny was on the point of making her first appearance at the rooms, conducted by lord Kilrennie; so little indeed was the latter circumstance regarded by them, that they looked forward most impatiently for the hour of exhibition; and Fanny, contrary to the expectations of her father, greatly of course to his satisfaction, departed for the gay scene of action with a countenance beaming delight in every feature, and eyes completely out-sparkling the jewels with which her lovely person was most profusely adorned.

On

On account of Mrs. Sharkem's having a severe cold, the young *debutante* was chaperoned by the viscountess Langburn, a Yorkshire lady (whose husband was under pecuniary obligations to old Sharkem of considerable magnitude); and never young person on *coming out* was honoured by a greater share of notice. Her beauty was sufficiently striking to have insured a flattering reception, but this was not her sole attraction—her story had gained ground universally, even in the short space of twenty-four hours, thanks to the communicative French milliner and her ramifications, if I may be allowed so to denominate her journeywomen and apprentices.

On their entering the rooms, every eye was directed to Miss Sharkem—

every tongue was employed in whispering something to a near neighbour respecting her. The inexperienced Fanny had not the smallest notion that she was the cause of the bustle which surrounded her, but ascribed it altogether to the custom of public places; she therefore calmly contemplated the gay and busy throng, and bore the scrutinizing glances levelled at her from belle and beau as unblushingly as the most brazened votary of fashion: in reality, she was much more anxious to find out amidst the crowd *a face familiar to her*, than to look for the admiration of strangers.

The *face* sought for was discovered—its owner soon after stood by her side—soon was heard soliciting the honour of her hand for the first two dances.

Alas!

Alas! the application came too late—my lord Kilrennie had been promised the felicity of leading her out; for the second set the young lady had no existing engagement.

Who was the being blest by this information, reader, think you?

“Do you take me for a fool, Mr. Author? who else could it be but Rodney St. Paul? Happy Rodney!”

Happy he certainly was, and perhaps, reader, you think happier he could not be than when about to hand out his charming Fanny: if you do think so, you are mistaken, for he felt an augmentation of pleasure when Miss Sharkem announced, with an enchanting smile, that after the conclusion of the second dance she should devote the

remainder of the evening to conversation.

“What long endless figures! what persevering dancers!” exclaimed our heroine a thousand times during her engagement with the little lord: “well, I think we shall never come to a pause!”

They did pause, however, and in due time the next party commenced their operations.

“What an animated creature is Miss Sharkem! How different she dances now! No wonder—that’s the very man who carried her into mademoiselle’s—it’s her old lover, in short.”

“What is he?”

“Who is he?”

“Oh! a poor boy—quite a *protégé* of  
of

of Mr. Sharkem's. He sent him to sea *entirely* at his own expence—I was told so this morning, *from the very best authority*; and now, you see, he wishes to carry off the daughter: what ingratitude—what unpardonable ingratitude! when by so doing he knows he shall prevent the daughter of his patron from becoming a countess; but this is generally the return one meets with from such sort of gentry—it quite disheartens one from patronizing."

"Well, I don't see any thing so very aspiring; the young man is certainly tolerably good looking, and you know—he, he, he! that as to family Mr. Sharkem has not *much* to boast—he, he, he! he's risen quite by *his wits*, I fancy—quite of the dunghill breed—he, he, he!"

These, and fifty times as many comments

ments and observations, were whispered—not always quite *whispered*, I must allow, during the time that our hero was dancing with his Fanny; but the young couple were too much taken up with each other—too anxious to reach the bottom, and then sit down and talk over their own affairs, to notice what was going on around them.

Their conversation was soon interrupted by lady Langburn, who came up to introduce a sir John Somebody: whoever it was, it made no difference to Fanny—she was fatigued, and must decline the intended honour.

Sir John walked off, not a little chagrined.

The lady viscountess remained—it was her duty to hover like a guardian angel round her young friend, and her duty



duty she felt determined to fulfil; as a proof of it, she whispered in Miss Shar-kem's ear—"Who is the person, my love, you have been dancing with? nobody seems to know his name or rank."

"He's a very old acquaintance indeed, lady Langburn," said Fanny, "a friend whom I have not seen for years, and with whom of course I wish to have a little conversation. I know all his relations, and it is but natural, your ladyship knows, for me to feel a desire of asking after their welfare."

Her ladyship was too faithful a chaperone to be thus easily driven off guard; and, I dare say, would not have quitted her post, had it not been for a whist-table (of which game she was  
dotingly

dotingly fond), that could not possibly be made up without her attendance.

For "*one rubber*" she promised to engage, and taking Miss Sharkem by the arm, exclaimed—"But I must not leave you here, my dear, or perhaps you will be changing your mind, and standing up again, and then the horses, which in consequence of your complaining fatigued I have ordered in half-an-hour, will have to wait—a thing which of all others Lord Langburn dislikes; and he's a true Yorkshireman, you know, Miss Sharkem, in his attachment to his cattle"

Rodney was not to be manœuvred off in this way; he kept as close on one side as lady Langburn did on the other, and whilst her ladyship was attending

tending to her cards, had the supreme felicity of uninterruptedly conversing with his lovely companion.

The persecutions which poor Fanny was daily undergoing from the persevering addresses of the disagreeable lord Kilrennie formed, as will be imagined, a leading feature in the discourse.

With the bold ingenuousness characteristic of a youthful sailor, Rodney proposed, as the only method of effectually dispelling her troubles, that, without waiting for or soliciting the consent of parents, they should set off to that land where no marriage-act would prevent their being united in the indissoluble bonds of wedlock.—“Then, my dear Fanny,” added he, with a supplicating look, and tender pressure of the hand, “we might defy the efforts of  
this

this teasing little monkey of a lord completely."

Rodney fancied—flattered himself the tender pressure was returned. The young lady certainly did not *frown* upon him—did not shew such resentment at the proposal as to rise up hastily and end the conference; but still she gravely and decidedly discountenanced it—first, as a breach of filial duty, which nothing short of the harshest measures on the part of her father could justify. —“And then,” added she, “perhaps you are not aware, Rodney, that by marrying you, contrary to my father’s wishes, I shall lose all right and title to the estates of Napperton, for so runs your good ‘*old cousin’s*’ will.”

“I know it all, Fanny—I know it all,” answered our hero; “but what is the

the

the estate of Napperton — what the whole county of York—the world—to me, in comparison with your precious self? Give me but a legal claim to this dear hand, and let my lord, or whoever your father pleases, take my worthy old cousin's estates."

Rodney, poor fellow! was just at an age when "love and a cottage" appeared the pinnacle of human felicity, and he consequently forgot what a poor provision would arise from the interest of fifteen hundred pounds, which was all that he and Fanny could call their own, if they united themselves without the approbation of Mr. Sharkem.

"Dear Rodney!" said Miss Sharkem, "do not press the point, I beseech you; it is exquisitely painful for me to refuse you any thing, but in this instance I  
feel

feel it my duty, and I must do so. The time of our conversing draws rapidly to an end, for the rubber is almost over; listen to me therefore, I pray you, rather than employ the few remaining minutes we shall be together in requesting that to which I cannot accede. Hear me declare, in the most solemn manner, that ever since old Mr. St. Paul's will was made known to me, it has been my daily study how I could properly return the domain bequeathed to me into the St. Paul family: that *you* lived, Rodney, I dared not to indulge a hope—I had therefore privately determined *never to marry*; then I should retain a disposing power over the Naperton estate at my decease, and in favour of some of your brothers or sisters I determined to exercise it. I meant, when

when I came of age, to reside at the Abbey, and endeavour to make Mrs. Frances Sharkem emulate the virtues of your deceased relatives, Mrs. Betty and Mrs. Mary St. Paul, and descend into the grave like them—a spinster. My spinster's humour, I must own, dear Rodney," continued she, blushing deeply, "was changed on meeting with you so providentially yesterday; but not my resolution to somehow or other restore the Abbey and its appendages to the family whose ancestors had so long possessed it."

"Dear, excellent, generous girl!" cried our hero; "I did not think my admiration of you could have been increased, but——"

"No more at present," interrupted Miss Sharkem—"the rubber is up."

"Sit

“ Sit still—sit still, my angel,” solicited Rodney; “ for though lady Langburn be pursing up her golden points, she is, good creature, cutting in again, forgetful of the poor cattle shivering in the cold; she is, I know, aware of the carriage having drawn up, for I heard a waiter announce it to her.”

Another half-hour, and all the eloquence of our true lover elicited nothing more from the determined Fanny than the repetition of a former promise never to unite herself with my lord Kilrennie: she added, however, an assurance, that in case Mr. Sharkem should still continue to press an union with her disagreeable admirer, and Rodney feel inclined to take her with her five hundred pounds portion, she would marry him the moment she had completed



pleted her twenty-first year—"For," observed she, "I shall then at least be mistress of my own person, and no law, human or divine, exists to prevent my disposing of it as I think proper.—The rubber is again ended."

"Yes," said Rodney, "and lady Langburn again employed in netting her golden fishes, and I suppose, from her countenance, would have no objection to angle for a few more of them; but her adversaries, I see, unluckily for me, are not disposed to indulge her ladyship, for they are moving off. Tomorrow, Fanny, shall I see you?"

"Yes," was the young lady's answer; "perhaps at the Pump Room, or more likely at ——'s library, about two."

Lady Langburn now sent a waiter to inform her coachman she was ready,  
and

and also to summon lord Kilrennie as her beau in waiting: he was stepping forward to seize the hand of Miss Sharkem; but Rodney had put her arm through his own.

“Be so good, my lord, as conduct lady Langburn,” said Fanny—“we will follow you;” and so they moved to the carriage.

CHAP-

CHAPTER VII.  
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Theseus.—Earthlier happy is the rose distill'd,
Than that which with'ring on a virgin thorn,
Grows, lives, and dies in single blessedness.

Hermia.—So will I grow, so live, so die, my lord,
Ere I will yield my virgin patent up
Unto his lordship, to whose unwish'd yoke
My soul consents not to give sovereignty.

SHAKESPEARE.

ON the following morning, much earlier than the world of fashion are accustomed to call upon their friends, or begin their tour of pops by proxy—*Anglice*, send round an empty chair to distribute their cards—did lady Langburn's footman thunder at the door of

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Mrs.

Mrs. Sharkem's lodgings, and announce that her ladyship wished to be admitted.

Mrs. Sharkem's dressing-room looked upon the street, and from it she had observed the approaching sedan, and by the liveries of its attendants guessed who was about to honour her with a visit.

"Blace me, Fay-ney! what in the wawrld cayn have indoosed leedy Lawngburn to come out so arely; she saretinly forgates we are at Bahth, where no living creetshure can pahsibly be seen, exsaipting at the Pahmp Room, before three. How incahnvenient it is! I wish she would stay quietly at hohme—why, I hav'n't got my mawrning drase on: dear me! how vahstly provoking!"

Miss

Miss Sharkem, not wishing to be a spectatress of her mamma's confusion at being thus caught before she had been "*dressed for undress*," or for some other reason best known to herself, retired.

Lady Langburn was admitted, and almost overwhelmed by Mrs. Sharkem's declarations and assurances of "how happy she was to see her leedyship—how kind it was of her leedyship to come so arely," &c. &c. &c.

The viscountess, as a matter of course, bowed most condescendingly, and increased quite to a smile the pretty everlasting simper into which she had primed her formal mouth, imagining it to convey a look of affability becoming her high rank: there was, however, notwithstanding her *sweet* smile, a some-

thing on her countenance which seemed to say she was not the bearer of pleasant news.

The purpose for which she *did* come was soon revealed, for her ladyship was scarcely seated before she began with her thousand apologies for what she was going to communicate, and her quite as many fears that "she should be thought unnecessarily officious; but really the respect she felt for Mr. Sharkem—the wish she entertained that a young person of Miss Sharkem's fortune should marry properly, and with a just regard to the rank of her husband, made it quite impossible to suppress *certain particulars* which had just come to her knowledge."

In short, not to tease my perusers with the right honourable lady's prosing style,

style, and her auditress's drawling acknowledgments of obligation for "her leedyship's kindness," I shall simply state that the viscountess had that morning received information from her own woman, who had it from a friend, to whom mademoiselle Fripponer's head apprentice communicated it, that Miss Sharkem had continued shut up in the milliner's back-parlour, with a *very improper kind of young man*, for more than two hours after her late accident; that the said young man was some low acquaintance who had followed her from Yorkshire, and was reported to be a complete beggar; in short, if Mr. Sharkem did not make use of some precautionary measures, it was generally believed that an elopement would be the consequence:

To strengthen her representations, she added, " she was afraid, really afraid, these unpleasant rumours were not altogether unfounded, as, in spite of all her chaperoning care, and endeavour to introduce proper partners on the preceding night, Miss Sharkem had certainly danced with a person whom nobody knew, and who had the impertinence to sit down with the young lady who had thus inconsiderately honoured him, close to her ladyship's whist-table." She then concluded by saying—" Considering all the circumstances of the case, Mrs. Sharkem, though I would not by any means wish to dictate, I think lord Kilrennie cannot do less than call him out — though, on second thoughts, he perhaps is below the notice of a man of his

his lordship's rank and figure in society. The best thing in the world, my dear friend, between ourselves, will be to push your interesting daughter's marriage with her noble suitor as much as possible—an earl, you know, dear Sharkem, is not to be caught every day.—But I must be going—out of pure friendship for you I have come quite in dishabille—I have to dress for callers, so must hurry home: adieu, adieu!—Don't think me officious, dear Mrs. Sharkem; it's quite an affair of duty to such an excellent neighbour as yourself. Adieu, *ma chere madame!*"

Without waiting for an interview with Fanny, away flew the indignant mamma to Mr. Sharkem's chamber.

Such a scene ensued as beggars de-
H 4 scription.

scription. The old gentleman "never once thought, conceived, or imagined, that his dear, sweet, excellent Fanny would have given, imparted, or afflicted, such pain upon him."

"And who, Mister Sharecum, cane the creetshure be who thahs presooms to look ahp to Fayney?"

Mr. Sharkem had a shrewd guess—Mrs. Sharkem not even a conjecture; for be it remembered that her husband was taken ill immediately after the recorded interview with Rodney, and had subsequently guarded the secret of the young sailor's return from his family with the utmost caution, hoping by that means not to have so much difficulty in persuading his daughter to marry the earl; for he was well aware, from various

ous

ous circumstances, that she still nourished her early attachment to poor Rodney.

Miss Sharkem was called; the gazette extraordinary of the morning was laid before her.

To the charge of dancing with a person "whom none of the company at the rooms but herself knew," she pleaded guilty; but "as to his being an improper partner," she denied it most strenuously, and appealed to her father and mother, "if he could be considered in that light, when he was in reality no other than Mr. Rodney St. Paul."

“Rawdney!” interrogated Mrs. Shar-
kem; “what, the little faylow whom
warthy Mr. St. Paul was so fawnd
of?”

“ Yes, mamma,” cried Fanny, “ the
H 5 very

very same—the dear, kind-hearted, excellent Rodney, of whom every one, as well as good old Mr. St. Paul, was fond. And to think of lady Langburn, or any body else, representing him as an improper partner for me, and that too at a time when he had just snatched me from the dangerous consequences of lord Kilrennie's injudicious driving!"

"And it was reelly the seme Rawd-ney?" asked Mrs. Sharkem: "how awd! Oh, he could not be so vary exsapetionable a partner, Mr. Sharecum?"

"Circumstances, Mrs. Sharkem," returned the solicitor, "alter, change, and give a new face and appearance to cases and statements. There *was* a time when Mister Rodney St. Paul would not by any manner of means have been
thought,

thought, considered, or set down as an improper partner for Miss Sharkem: but now—hem!—now—now things are altered, changed, reversed—now Miss Sharkem is contracted, engaged, betrothed, to the right honourable the earl of Kilrennie, viscount——”

“ Papa, papa!” exclaimed Fanny, “do not—do not say so—think so; I cannot, indeed I cannot be his!”

“ Daughter—Fanny—Miss Sharkem!” cried the old gentleman; “do you wish and design to make me mad—to destroy—to murder me? You know and understand, perfectly and exactly well, that you *are* engaged to the noble lord aforesaid and described—you are aware and sensible of *my* promises to his lordship—you know, in short, that you *must* be his.”

“Never, never, papa!” cried Miss Sharkem; “for even if Rodney had not made his appearance, I could not have given my hand to lord Kilrennie: but now—now,” continued she, covered with crimson blushes, “it is *quite* impossible. You know, my dear sir, old Mr. St. Paul’s designs.”

“*Designs!*” repeated Sharkem, with an almost convulsive start, “*designs!* Fanny—Miss Sharkem—I don’t clearly and decidedly understand and comprehend you; but—but—it matters not—it signifies not—the earl’s you must and shall be, if ever you marry and enjoy the estate of Napperton.”

“At any rate, my dear papa,” resumed Fanny, “I never will be the wife of the earl of Kilrennie.”

“Obstinate, perverse girl—nay, ungrateful,

grateful, I may well proclaim you and declare you, since you make such a return for all I have *done* and undertaken for your aggrandizement and elevation," said solicitor Sharkem.

"Do not stigmatize me with such horrible epithets," cried Fanny; "I do not, my dear papa, indeed I do not deserve them. I cannot act otherwise than I do—I cannot accept lord Kilrennie's offer, whilst I feel myself engaged in a different quarter. To overlook poor Rodney's claim upon myself and the estate of his old cousin would, in my humble opinion, be a downright insult to the memory of the latter, for which I could never forgive myself.—You know, dear sir, how good Mr. St. Paul would have decided for me, if he had

had lived to see his beloved boy's return."

"Fanny—Miss Sharkem, no more," cried the solicitor; "not a syllable, word, or sentence, in this strain. *I do insist and command you to marry my lord.* What Mr. St. Paul, in his own proper person, would have done or enacted, is of no consequence, importance, or signification to me whatsoever. He thought right to appoint me the judge as to who was, or might be, a proper, fit, and convenient husband for you; and I shall not, I do hereby solemnly publish and declare, betray my sacred trust so far as to bestow you on a man neither possessed, nor likely to be possessed, of hereditary rank, nor any right, title, or interest, in or unto lands, tenements,

tenements, or hereditaments, whatsoever or wheresoever."

Fanny adhered to her declarations against lord Kilrennie, and in favour of our friend Rodney, and this with a firmness which her father unhesitatingly pronounced "obstinate pertinacity, base ingratitude, and unprecedented opposition to a power and authority lawfully ordained, constituted, and appointed." And so vehement was he in the utterance of these and similar expressions, together with threats of everlasting displeasure, that the exertion produced a most tremendous attack of spasm at the stomach.

For a considerable length of time he remained apparently lifeless, and when he again recovered the power of breathing freely, was so extremely weak, that
it

it was deemed expedient to convey him to his bed.

What a scene for the affectionate Fanny! What a dangerous moment for our hero's tenderest interests!

A daughter like Fanny must yield to the entreaties of a parent who seemed struggling between life and death. Could he, I really think, have repeated them whilst his head lay gasping for breath upon his daughter's shoulder; she would have complied with the demand, had it been ever so unreasonable. Her firmness certainly melted; she conceded, for when Mr. Sharkem became composed enough to converse—Now don't be alarmed, reader—the concession was not death to our Rodney's hopes; it only bound Miss Sharkem not to admit

mit of her young friend's personal attentions during their continuance at Bath.

Whilst these transactions were going on at Sharkem's lodgings in Laura-buildings, it will be naturally concluded that Rodney remained in a most painful state of expectation. He went to the Pump-room, and, although no partaker of Hygeia's salubrious stream, waited there till the water-drinkers ceased arriving.

Before the hour of two he had taken possession of a seat near the window in ——'s library, and thence was minutely inspecting every vehicle which passed. Many a dashing carriage stopped at the door—many an angelic figure tripped lightly into the room—but, alas! the

the object whom his eyes longed to rest upon appeared not.

At the expiration of more than a couple of hours, a young female advanced to the man who delivers out books, and Rodney fancied he heard her whisper his name.

"I really don't know the gentleman, ma'am," was the answer she received, and with it she was moving off.

"Who is the lady inquiring for?" asked our hero.

"Mr. Rodney St. Paul," returned the librarian.

"That is my name," exclaimed the young sailor.

The girl was stopped, and on interrogation said she "came from Mr. Sharkey's, and had a note for Mr. Rodney St.

St. Paul;" it was in the handwriting of Fanny, and contained the following lines:—

" DEAR RODNEY,

" In former days you flattered me with such prompt attention to my requests, that I somehow think you will not prove deaf to my present solicitation, though so arbitrary and unreasonable as to require your immediate departure from Bath without an interview or explanation.

" When we shall return into the North I know not with any degree of certainty; but be assured, whenever it happens, I shall still remain

" *Your*

" FRANCES SHARKEM."

" P.S.—

“ P. S.— Answer you must not attempt to send. Adieu !”

“ Yes, Fanny, dear Fanny, you judge me rightly,” sighed Rodney, when he had perused the letter; “ and I still continue so much devoted to you, that I will unhesitatingly comply with any of your commands, unless they require me to renounce and cease to love you. I confide in you implicitly; and, in proof, will quit this place by to-morrow’s mail.”

The short postscript of Miss Shar-
kem’s letter he did not, however, seem
to notice, for he dispatched a servant
with a note to be delivered to that young
lady’s maid, announcing the time of his
departure, and including a declaration,
sincere,

sincere, though brilliant as youthful feeling could make it, that on her depended all his hopes of terrestrial happiness.

CHAP.

CHAPTER VIII.
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His crimes, like evil spirits, hover over him—he wishes to shun danger, but how? He looks around, but the world he worshipped affords him not a single hope—he looks within; his terrified imagination drives him presently back—his breast heaves with a tumult of distress, and his dying hour closes upon him like the gloom of a stormy night.

GILPIN.

ON all accounts, the readiness with which Rodney complied with his dismissal from Bath was highly satisfactory to Mr. Sharkem and lord Kilrennie; to the latter it afforded an uninterrupted opportunity of pressing his tender suit—to the old gentleman, time (according to

to



to his sanguine hopes) for disposing of our hero in a way which, whilst it displayed great attention to the interests of the St. Paul family, would remove the young sailor immediately from England, and that, most likely, for many years.

It has before been mentioned, more than once, that Mr. Sharkem had considerable influence with persons high in office at the Admiralty : when could he exert it more properly than at a time when the former favourite of his " dear, good, excellent Mr. St. Paul was in want of professional employment ?"

" Heaven forbid that he should neglect, omit, or lose an opportunity of serving and benefiting, to the utmost bound, limit, and extent of his *little* power, any member, branch, or scion  
of

of the family to which he felt such a weight of obligation !”

The strongest proof a man can give of gratitude is an eagerness to oblige and serve those from whom their benefits have descended: this proof was strikingly displayed in the promptitude with which Sharkem set about providing for the relation of the late venerable squire of Napperton Abbey; for the very day succeeding Rodney's quitting Bath he wrote a pressing entreaty to his correspondent at the Admiralty, to procure for his young friend some respectable employment on board the fleet which, he observed in the newspapers, was on the eve of sailing for a distant foreign station, where ships generally continued a long time.

Sharkem neither sued in vain, nor  
was

was kept long in suspense as to the result of his application, for, in a few posts, he received the formal appointment of Mr. Rodney St. Paul to an honourable and lucrative situation on board his majesty's ship the ———, of seventy-four guns, with a postscript, which, by the way, was not the least acceptable part of the communication, announcing that the young gentleman must be at Spithead in the course of three weeks.

Enclosed in a letter, tedious as the verbose writer could make it, and including an assurance that Rodney might consider the present as merely a preliminary step towards superior honours, this important document was soon travelling in the mail to Yorkshire.

Mr. and Mrs. Sharkem were now in high spirits, and felt almost as much elevated as if able to talk to their family and friends of their daughter the countess, and their son-in-law the earl. The noble lord too seemed to feel himself completely on the 'vantage ground,' and strutted on it as consequentially as if the fair heiress and her domains were absolutely in his power and possession. The argument among them was, that Rodney's departure from England (which they considered quite certain) would facilitate their measures in the same sort of way that the withdrawing of a numerous opposing force would ~~these~~ of an army which considered themselves on the brink of annihilation.

How different was the impression  
made

made upon poor Fanny by the news of Rodney's appointment! it "knocked upon her heart" like the knell of every tender hope.—"With thy departure, oh Rodney, beloved Rodney!" sighed she, whilst she pressed a pillow moistened with tears of fond regret, "I shall bid adieu to every comfort which affluence can bestow! I will, however, sacredly hold myself as thy exclusive property. Never," added she, with as much fervency as if breathing a prayer, "by *any* act of mine shall the estate of Napper-ton descend from me to any but a St. Paul. I consider myself as nothing more than a trustee, holding it for the rightful heir."

How little did she dream, at this moment, of an act of hers, about to be committed, which would effectually

change the succession to the domains in question.

Sharkem's letter reached Danesdale, the residence of Rodney's mother, in regular time, but met with a reception altogether the reverse of what the *generous* patron expected from his *protégé* (as he wished our hero to be considered), for he rejected the offer at once, and decidedly. In fact, he neither liked the bestower, nor the sort of promotion announced; one he knew well enough to suspect of serving him with some sinister intent, and the other could not be enjoyed without re-entering a service, for which his extraordinary adventures had given him a complete distaste.

The answer which he returned to Sharkem was civil, but determinately negative; and never answer gave greater  
pain

pain and astonishment: the old gentleman read it two or three times over, and opened and closed the rejected appointment as often, before he seemed to consider the papers before him real.—“Who could have conceived, thought, or imagined,” said he to himself, “that this poor, unprovided-for, beggarly lad, would have refused and rejected such an advantageous offer, the profits and advantages wherefrom arising would be no less than four hundred pounds per annum, of good and lawful money of Great Britain? He must undoubtedly, unquestionably, suppose and opine, that he has a better and more desirable thing *in prospectum*, namely, a sort of contingent remainder in the inheritance of Napperton, through the right and interest of Frances Sharkem.”

To this he added a sort of mental vow, that his daughter should ennoble herself, or never have the power of transmitting to her own posterity the estates bequeathed by Mr. St. Paul's will.

As a measure likely to accelerate this desired consummation of his *right honourable* wishes, he carefully concealed the receipt of our hero's provoking refusal, for he argued that Fanny, once convinced that Rodney had quitted the kingdom, and that without either endeavouring to see her, or making any communication by letter, might possibly soften in favour of lord Kilrennie, as other slighted ladies have done towards lovers who, in different circumstances, would have been considered intolerably disagreeable.

Poor



Poor Fanny was certainly very seriously distressed at the idea of Rodney's again embarking on the dangerous seas: but still she felt not as her father expected (perhaps intended) she should; she had faith in her beloved sailor's sincerity, and, *if it were possible* he should not prove what she held him to be, she still determined that she would not alienate Napperton from his family, by an union with any other man.

With these sentiments and determinations, it is scarcely necessary to say that lord Kilrennie did not discover any encouraging sunbeams on her countenance; and although Mr. Sharkem continued ten weeks in Bath, he took his daughter home quite as averse to a coronet as when she quitted Yorkshire. The old lawyer, however, affected to

I 4

regard

regard a connexion with the earl as certain and unavoidable, for he was perpetually talking of something which had reference to it, and spent a great deal of money in purchases, which he took care to whisper to those surrounding him, were made preparatory to a certain wedding, on the eve of taking place. From these, and other circumstances, the life of Miss Sharkem became miserable in the extreme. Lord Kilrennie, encouraged by her father, assumed all the consequence of an accepted lover, and daily presumed to talk of his approaching hour of felicity.

Ornamental articles of pearl and jewellery arrived from town, suited to the embellishment of a fashionable bride; and shortly after, Mr. Sharkem presented to his daughter, for her signature,  
deeds

deeds of settlement, by which, he triumphantly informed her, the noble earl had *generously* consented, that the whole of *her own* large fortune should (with the exception of his lordship's enjoying a life-interest in it) remain at her own disposal.

Fanny indignantly turned away from the writings presented, and repeated what she had said a thousand times before, that nothing could induce her to marry lord Kilrennie.

Sharkem as firmly asserted that her opposition would be vain, for a special licence had been obtained; and within a very few days she must either become lady Kilrennie, or brand her father with the character of a man who adhered not to his solemn word of honour.

Mrs. Sharkem likewise was not idle, for she eternally annoyed her unhappy child with a display of satins, silks, and laces, which she failed not to introduce as bridal finery; and talked as confidently about the presentation of her daughter, the countess of Kilrennie, at court, as if such an event were sure to take place at the very next drawing-room.

“What a wretched life must have been poor Fanny’s!” will, I doubt not, be here the general exclamation.

It was indeed, kind-hearted exclaim-er; for besides these parental communications of her intended fate, she was surrounded by spies, who never left her a moment to herself; letter or message she could neither send nor receive unknown to the family—ride or walk,  
beyond

beyond her father's grounds, she was not allowed to take, unaccompanied by the little lord; and, on that account, she entirely declined either.

So circumstanced, it was not likely she should discover, that instead of having embarked on board his majesty's ship the ———, Rodney still continued at Danesdale, and almost daily hovered round her dwelling, in hopes of procuring an interview.

It was but seldom that even of the garden she could obtain exclusive possession, for her mother or her maid almost invariably accompanied her.

One fine spring evening, however, when Mrs. Sharkem was kept within doors by a severe cold, and abigail, like others of her sisterhood, was attracted from her fair charge to the servants'

16

hall,

hall, by the arrival of a neighbouring butler, whom she had the vanity of supposing she had seriously captivated, Fanny wandered forth alone, in the shrubbery adjoining her father's house, which led to a terrace, commanding a very extensive view of the country below, which stretched its highly cultivated, though, owing to its want of undulation, not very picturesque landscape, for many a mile, until the towers of that beautiful church, St. John of Beverley, were clearly distinguishable on the verge of the horizon.

Here she paced along with irregular steps, soliloquizing as she went, not always in very inaudible strains; the name of her dear absent lover was frequently breathed from her lips.

Suddenly she was interrupted by a  
deep

deep sigh. She started, looked round, and, much to her astonishment, beheld, at the foot of the wall, which raised the terrace on which she stood ten feet above the adjacent fields, Rodney St. Paul.

What lover would have regarded such an inconsiderable height as an inaccessible barrier between him and an adored object?

At any rate, a sailor could not, for he *climbs professionally*. In a few moments our hero was at the feet of his charming mistress. Soon he learnt, in full detail, her wrongs and grievances—soon found she had not received one out of many letters which he had entrusted to her maid since her return from Bath.—“And will you, my dearest girl,” said he, “thus give yourself up to such persecution—

persecution—such unjust tyranny? thus deprive me of the power of protecting you?”

“What can I do, Rodney?” sighed she. “The inheritance of Napperton ought to be, and must be yours; and should I pursue the measure you advise, it will be lost to you for ever. I must, alas! bear my present trials! Remember, time will bring them to an end.”

“Fanny, dear Fanny!” cried the impassioned Rodney, “think not of Napperton—you are every thing my heart can wish for of happiness below! With you I defy all care—without you a crown would not have a single charm!”

“My father may relent,” said Fanny, “and then——”

“Trust not, dearest,” resumed the young sailor, “to such an uncertainty.

Fathers



Fathers are not generally formed of melting materials; they are too apt to forget the feelings of youth—too apt to think they are discharging their duty to their children, when procuring for them merely aggrandizing connexions.”

By degrees Fanny's scruples gave way. Passion, which had “grown with her growth,” prompted her to be Rodney's; persecution impelled her to become so, without waiting for the consent of her father.

Within a few days from this important and decisive interview, the youthful pair were flying on wings of love to Gretna, so often heard of by the readers of romance.

The elopement was not altogether unsanctioned by Mrs. St. Paul, for she promised an asylum to the travellers on their

their return from the North; and there they were consequently received with as much kindness and affection, as if the bride had brought with her the weighty recommendation of the often-mentioned estates of Napperton.

The first act of Fanny, after the conclusion of her matrimonial excursion, was to write in a very humble style to her father, acknowledging that the step she had taken was not quite consistent with her notions of filial duty, and would not have been taken, but from fear of being compelled to an act so abhorrent to her feelings, as that of bestowing her hand unaccompanied by her heart.

This letter, which was couched in the most respectful language, and concluded with a pathetic petition for forgiveness  
and

and restoration to favour, was not certainly returned; but it was answered in a way nearly as mortifying, for Mr. Sharkem declared that "he no longer regarded her as his daughter, and consequently must decline any communication, intercourse, or correspondence whatsoever or wheresoever, with her, or the family with whom she had intermarried."

As Rodney had decidedly renounced the sea, and the united property of himself and his wife was quite inadequate to furnish an independent support, it was deemed expedient that he should turn his mind to some new profession. Farming was recommended at the family council held on this important occasion; and that particularly, be-  
cause

cause Matthew was at hand to superintend.

A small estate adjoining Danesdale was soon after taken, and to it the young couple were to retire at the following Lady-day. Stock and implements of husbandry were to be furnished by the elder brother of the St. Pauls, who promised to advance Rodney's portion of a younger child, amounting to about one thousand pounds, without waiting until he had attained his majority.

Fanny's legacy, under Mrs. Mary St. Paul's will, was payable on the day of her marriage, so that it would furnish cash with which to begin the world: when she came of age, she would likewise have a claim upon her father  
for

for arrears of rent arising out of the Abbey property, which had been received from the day of the old cousin's death until the time when her marriage without the consent of old Sharkem took place; so that, altogether, they would, shortly after the commencement of the agricultural operations, distant about ten months, have a capital which promised to our unambitious and inexperienced pair, if judiciously employed, every comfort which could result from "a plain rational scheme of life."

Delightedly anticipating the period when they should feel completely established in the world, and in possession of that peace and serenity inseparable from a well-regulated family, where every member is anxious to be reckoned among the number of those who "dwell together

together in unity," we will leave Rodney and his lovely Fanny for a few pages, and direct our attention to the movements of our *wordy* acquaintance, solicitor Sharkem: he felt his daughter's departure very severely, not merely from the loss of her unremitting assiduity, but also from the interruption it gave to his ambitious views: the way by which he strove to direct his attention from this irremediable stroke was, by turning it to the aggrandizement of his eldest son, whom he meant to succeed to Napperton Abbey, and for whom he projected a match with the almost-ideot daughter and heiress of a neighbouring squire, whose propensity to matrimony had been pretty strongly manifested by her repeated attempts to elope with her father's servants.

How

How often are such mercenary schemes interrupted by the striking visitations of Providence! In the present instance this was peculiarly observable: the intended bridegroom was most graciously received by the young lady—rapturously hailed as a son-in-law by her parents; an establishment was forming—servants were hired—carriages and horses were purchased; in three weeks the marriage was to be consummated.

Alas! ten days previous to the appointed ceremony, young Sharkem was attacked by a typhus fever, which terminated his life.

Before half the mourning for this elder hope had expired, fell another shaft of fate on the solicitor's house: the remaining son was killed by falling  
from

from a horse, which, contrary to the request of his father, and the advice of his grooms, he persevered in riding.

Such events might have been expected to lead to Fanny's immediate re-establishment under the roof of her parents, whose only child she had now become; but they did not, from the proceedings at Sharkem's, appear likely to produce such desirable consequences; the old gentleman had *pronounced* his daughter's banishment, and he wished his edicts, in this, as well as other circumstances, to be regarded like the unalterable laws of the Medes and Persians: and such influence had pride over him, that he preferred adopting an hundred-and-fiftieth cousin as his heir, to receiving back his own penitent offspring,



spring, which could not be done without breaking his *decree*, though the keeping of it were equally contrary to nature and justice.

Let it not for one moment be supposed that Mrs. Rodney St. Paul failed to offer her sincere condolences to her father and mother on the melancholy catastrophe of their two sons; she wrote to them most dutifully—most movingly. She even ventured to present herself at their house; but she was denied admittance, and her letter remained unnoticed.

What but hearts of stone could have resisted the pathetic appeal of an only surviving child—a child so good, so affectionate as Fanny? This appeal, too, made at a time when they were  
aware

aware she was many months advanced in that state in which Home beautifully observes,

“ Women wish to be,  
Who love their lords.”

This unforgiving temper of those so near to her in blood, in spite of all the tender efforts of Rodney and his family, preyed upon the spirits of poor Fanny; and so generally do body and mind sympathize, that her health gradually declined, until it became the united opinion of her medical attendants, that in giving birth to the expected infant she must yield her life.

As her trying hour approached, she felt an increased desire for reconciliation; and, as a last effort to effect it, sat down and composed one of the  
most

most moving addresses that could proceed from human eloquence: it stated her weak and hopeless condition—her unspeakable misery in dying unblessed by the parental lip—and finished with a solemn appeal in behalf of an unborn being, who never could have offended them.

The exertion of writing this epistle accelerated her labour, for she was taken extremely ill, and with every unpromising symptom, before her messenger had proceeded half way from Danesdale to Mr. Sharkem's.

This letter produced more than the writer expected or designed, for it not only rekindled the father's slumbering affection for his child, but so agitated him, as to produce an almost instantaneous return of his spasmodic complaint.

For several hours, he continued, in a state which disqualified him alike from speaking or writing a forgiving sentence to his unhappy daughter, though he struggled hard for utterance, and made many attempts to use his pen; at length he succeeded, with much trembling of hand, in committing to paper—

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“DEAR FANNY,

“I forgive thee—bless thee most heartily, sincerely, and devoutly.”

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And with these words the courier was immediately dispatched to the dowager Mrs. St. Paul's.

Alas! he arrived there “in evil hour,”  
for

for he had scarcely entered the kitchen at Damesdale, before he heard a sudden shriek amongst the women up stairs, and one of the female attendants rushed instantly into the apartment, with the woful intelligence that Mrs. Rodney, after bringing forth a dead child, had breathed her last.

Sharkem's messenger waited not further particulars—offered not the note of which he had been the bearer, but hurried from the house of mourning, and flew, rather than rode, home with the sad news.

If Sharkem were so dreadfully moved by his child's last address, his feelings, when he heard *that* child was no more—that she had departed, unconscious of his blessing, will be easily conceived. He sunk under it, as a tree

suddenly blasted by the lightning; he revived, however, and to a full apprehension of his situation. The first question he plainly articulated was to his medical attendant, and it interrogated, how long he had a prospect of surviving?

The pupil of Esculapius would have spoken "flattering words," but old Sharkem would not admit them as true evidence.—"Answer me, doctor," said he, unhesitatingly, "decidedly. Recovery I feel is impossible; the thunderbolt has smitten me—I must be its victim."

The doctor's looks betrayed a similarity of opinion; but it was not before Mr. Sharkem had repeated his question, that it was answered—"You may probably hold out twelve hours."

A shudder

A shudder went through the frame of poor Sharkem; but he recomposed himself wonderfully, and merely exclaimed—"The time is short; but I must try and endeavour to use or employ it properly. Call Wilson."

Wilson came, and was closeted with his old employer for nearly an hour, during which a will was constructed, in as few words as possible, constituting Rodney St. Paul sole heir, not only of the Abbey, but all his other property; merely charging it with a legacy of five thousand pounds to Mrs. Sharkem, and the sum of one thousand to the child whom he had lately announced an intention of adopting.

This document had not long been executed before the senses of the testator became obviously and alarmingly

K 3                      disordered.

disordered. He raved of widows and orphans defrauded—of estates unjustly alienated from their legal heirs—of Mr. St. Paul giving him instructions for the disposal of his estates, which were never attended to—and a thousand other matters of similar import, which led to conjectures not very likely to prepossess the auditors with an idea that his had been a fair practice.

Long before the time mentioned by the doctor, he was seized with the agonies of dissolution, and breathed out his soul in groans the most dreadful that ever surely issued from mortal breast.

Reader, would you avoid such a latter end?

You *would*, I am sure—you *will*, I hope. If so, shun the crimes of the  
unfortunate



unfortunate Sharkem—"do justly—love mercy—walk humbly."

Then will you not only live the life, but "die the death of the righteous," and peace shall be with you, and rest upon you.

## CHAPTER IX.

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All of a tenor was their after-life,  
No day discolour'd with domestic strife;  
No jealousy, but mutual truth believ'd—  
Secure repose, and kindness undeceiv'd.

DRYDEN.

EARLY on the following day Wilson was at the door of Mrs. St. Paul's dwelling, inquiring for Mr. Rodney, and begging, if possible, to speak with him immediately. Much to his astonishment, the gentleman asked for came instantly forward, and with a countenance quite the reverse of what might be expected in a man recently bereaved of

of

of a wife so lovely and so excellent as Fanny ; in truth, that interesting young woman still lived — was even in a state which promised restoration to health.

After delivery she had indeed, from protracted and excessive suffering, fainted, and remained for a great length of time in a state so strongly resembling death, that one of the women about her had unthinkingly run down to inform the family “ all was over.”

For many days — nay, I may say weeks, the decease of her father was carefully withheld from the delicate invalid ; and not until her convalescence became decided, did even a hint upon the subject escape from the lips of the cautious and affectionate Rodney.

By degrees the melancholy detail was wholly unfolded.

At first the sad intelligence had quite an overwhelming influence, and perhaps would have proved fatal, had her father departed without leaving behind him a sentence of forgiveness for the only important step she ever took contrary to his wishes. Time, however, aided by religious resignation, ameliorated her affliction, and at the expiration of about six months from the departure of the old solicitor, Mr. and Mrs. Rodney St. Paul went to reside at Napperton Abbey, which, contrary to the general practice of those who inherit ancient mansion-houses, they preferred to the most splendid habitation which the first architect of the age could have erected.

There

There was indeed no part of the venerable fabric, its furniture or appendages, which they were not old-fashioned enough to reverence with an almost superstitious fondness; and nothing that repair could do was spared, in order to keep every thing up in the same order which had been observed in the time of our worthy "old cousin."

The day when Rodney and his partner took possession of their intended home was truly a jubilee to every inhabitant of their village. The great hall was thronged with the tenants and their wives; the servants' hall was thrown open to the inferior classes: Rodney was installed in his venerable cousin's Gothic chair, and Fanny in the seat whence Mrs. Mary St. Paul had so long done

done the honours of her brother's hospitable residence.

Sympson and the Hatchways, of course, were not forgotten; and theirs was not merely the feast of the day, for an annuity was immediately settled upon them, quite sufficient to render "all the remaining days of the years of their earthly pilgrimage" days of plenty and rejoicing.

As I would not by any means wish to leave you, dear reader, in the dark respecting the fate of any of those personages with whom you have formed an acquaintance in the preceding volumes, I think it right to observe that the widow Sharkem bore the loss of her dearly-beloved lord with all becoming fortitude and resignation, and was well  
enough

enough, at the time when fashion authorized the first change of mourning, to remove, *for the benefit of her health*, to the city of Bath—a place justly celebrated for assuaging griefs the most violent and ungovernable, especially (it is said) those of buxom well-jointed dowagers.

The first person who called to congratulate Mrs. Sharkem on her arrival, and no doubt to condole with her on her recent affliction, was the little earl of Kilrennie. Such early attention could not prove less than flattering—could not but elicit from the fair widow an assurance that she should “at all times feel happy and honoured by his visits.”

My lord, notwithstanding his high  
rank,

rank, was not often accustomed to such civil and encouraging receptions. He looked at the speaker; he beheld a well-looking little woman, with the blooming cheeks and arbuton looks of sixteen. He meditated privately on the advantages which would arise to him from a participation in her jointure, and the possession of her ready money, and came to an immediate resolution of informing her, that the capricious urchin, Cupid, had compelled him to transfer his affections from her daughter to herself.

Within a fortnight from his first call he declared his uncontrollable passion in due form.

The lovely matron had her "delicate confusions," her scruples about entering  
a second



a second time into the marriage-state; but his "*lordship* was *soo praysing—soo perswaysive*, there was no *possibee-ly* of *refoosing* him."

In short, his lordship's approaching happiness was almost immediately afterwards announced to the public in "the Morning Post" list of "expected marriages in high life;" and on the day when the charming dowager entered the thirteenth month of her widowhood, she had her fair forehead ornamented with a countess's coronet.

The bridal excursion of this noble and distinguished pair was, by invitation from Mr. and Mrs. Rodney St. Paul, to Napperton Abbey, and there they were received with every mark of respect and hospitality. What rendered

ed their entertainment festive in the highest degree, was their arrival on the very day appointed for the christening of Rodney's first-born son, who received the baptismal appellation of "Christopher," and over whom our hero piously ejaculated, as he held him in his arms, after the impressive ceremony of the church ended—"I thank thee, Almighty Ruler and Dispenser of every earthly blessing, for all which thou hast done for me and mine—for the providential care by which I escaped my perilous wanderings by sea and land—for the restoration of my family inheritance—for the society of my dear Fanny—and, though last not least, for the gift bestowed upon me in this lovely boy. May we have grace  
to

to bring him up in the true faith and fear of thee ! and may he emulate, in every human excellence and amiable perfection, his namesake and kinsman—  
*my old cousin !*"

FINIS.

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